



'Noble Just Industrialism'

Saint-Simonism in the Political Thought of Thomas Carlyle

Alexander Jordan

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

Florence, 27th March 2015

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Department of History and Civilization

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the contribution of the Saint-Simonians, a group of early French socialists, to the political thought of Thomas Carlyle, one of the most eminent Victorian intellectuals. First, an introduction surveys the existing secondary literature, and discusses the theory and method employed in the thesis. The subsequent chapter briefly recounts the story of Carlyle's encounter with the Saint-Simonians during the early 1830s. Each of the following five chapters deals with the 'transfer' of a particular Saint-Simonian concept, that is, the use that Carlyle made of the concept in a specifically British context. These five concepts are, broadly: (1) 'Industrialism'; (2) History; (3) Democracy and Laissez-Faire; (4) the 'Organisation of Labour'; (5) Empire. Finally, an epilogue addresses the contribution of Carlyle's thought to the early Labour movement, 1880-1935.

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愛しています

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Introduction:

Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians

In her memoirs, the essayist and political economist Harriet Martineau, a close acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle, recalled the arrival of a Saint-Simonian 'mission' in London during the early 1830s. In doing so, Martineau simultaneously provided a remarkably succinct summary of the key ideas of these early French socialists. She wrote:

the disciples of St. Simon were not few in England, and their quality was of no mean order... many listened, with new hope and a long-forgotten cheer, to the preaching of the golden rule of this new faith – that every one should be employed according to his capacity, and rewarded according to his works. Society was to be ruled by persons of genius and virtue; and under them, all were to have a fair start – to be allowed the free use of their best powers, and reap their natural reward. The spiritual, intellectual, and industrial concerns of each and all were to be combined in a closer union than ever before; and thus, work was to be worship, and affectionate cooperation was to be piety.¹

Some years later, in 1846, Joseph Antoine Milsand published a commentary on Carlyle in the *Revue Indépendante*, a periodical that had been founded five years earlier by the former Saint-Simonian Pierre Leroux. In it, Milsand argued that Carlyle's writings embodied 'all the distinguishing features of English socialism, of which he himself is the leader'.² Continuing, Milsand claimed to detect the 'Saint-Simonian heresy' at work. He wrote:

The terminology of the school proceeds repeatedly from the lips of Mr. Carlyle. His *hero*... resembles in more than one regard the *poète-artiste* of [the Saint-Simonians]... Our author also classifies the faculties of mankind in accordance with the Saint-Simonian hierarchy... [even] if Mr. Carlyle does not approve of their attempts to put their system into practice... he seems, like them, to yearn for the coming of an aristocracy of ability.³

Upon reading the review, Carlyle exclaimed: 'A rare character among reviewers and men! The

1 Martineau, *A History of the Thirty Years' Peace, A.D. 1816-1846* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1877), III:74-76.

2 'Antoine Dilmans' [Joseph Antoine Milsand], 'Thomas Carlyle', in *La Revue Indépendante* (25th Sep. 1846), 123. Throughout this thesis, any translations from the French, German, or Italian are my own, unless otherwise stated.

3 Milsand, 'Thomas Carlyle', 145.

image you have formed of me may well deserve looking at, while so many others do not'.⁴

Although historians have not looked closely at Carlyle's debts to the Saint-Simonians, they have at least thrown a fair few sidelong glances. The pioneering study was that of Friedrich Muckle, who, in his *Henri de Saint-Simon: Die Persönlichkeit und Ihr Werk* (1908), concluded, perhaps with some hyperbole, that Carlyle was 'nothing but the genial interpreter of a number of the ideas of Saint-Simon'.⁵ In a short pamphlet published in 1931, David Brooks Cofer, seemingly unaware of Muckle's study, arrived at much the same conclusion, averring a 'similarity, on almost every page, between the doctrines of [Saint-Simon] and those of Thomas Carlyle'.⁶ Ten years later, the discussion was given yet further impetus by Hill Shine, who, in a book-length study far more detailed than those of Muckle and Cofer, demonstrated the extent to which Carlyle was indebted to the Saint-Simonian concept of 'historical periodicity'.⁷ However, the theses advanced by Muckle, Cofer, and Shine proved highly controversial, and were vehemently rejected by a number of Carlyle scholars. For instance, Cofer was in short order branded a 'Saint-Simonian zealot' by Ella M. Murphy, who, with some reason, argued that he had failed to adequately substantiate his claims.⁸ In response to Hill Shine, René Wellek insisted that there was in fact an 'unbridgeable gulf' between Saint-Simonism and the 'philosophy' of Carlyle, and, two years later, in 1946, Ernst Cassirer declared that the 'attempts made in recent literature' to 'connect' Carlyle 'with St. Simonism' were 'futile'.⁹ Indeed, given the superficiality of the studies of Muckle and Cofer, and the narrow emphasis of Shine upon 'historical periodicity', such suspicion on the part of Carlyle scholars was no doubt partly justified. In 1957, the subject was again re-opened by Richard Pankhurst, who, on the basis of various archival and periodical sources, established that Carlyle was one of a number of British intellectuals who responded positively to Saint-Simonian 'missionaries' during the early 1830s.¹⁰ However, as before, such conclusions did not go unchallenged. For instance, in an article

4 TC to J. A. Milsand, 24th Dec. 1846, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-), 21:119.

5 Friedrich Muckle, 'Saint-Simon und Carlyle', in his *Henri de Saint-Simon: Die Persönlichkeit und Ihr Werk* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1908), 345-380 (379). However, Muckle then added: 'Es wird Aufgabe eines künftigen Carlyle-Biographen sein, die hier gegebenen Ausführungen über das intellektuelle Verhältnis der beiden Denker, wenn es nötig sein sollte, zu vervollständigen' (379).

6 David Brooks Cofer, *Saint-Simonism in the Radicalism of Thomas Carlyle* (College Station TX: The English Publishing Company, 1931), 30.

7 Hill Shine, *Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians: The Concept of Historical Periodicity* (Baltimore MA: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941).

8 Ella M. Murphy, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians', in *Studies in Philology*, 33:1 (1936), 94.

9 René Wellek, 'Carlyle and the Philosophy of History', in *Philological Quarterly*, 23 (1944), 55-86 (56); Ernst Cassirer, 'The Preparation: Carlyle', in his *The Myth of the State* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1946), 189-223 (221). In a footnote, Cassirer cited Wellek in support of this claim (221 [n]).

10 Richard K.P. Pankhurst, *The Saint-Simonians, Mill and Carlyle* (London: Lalibela Books, 1957). Pankhurst had already advanced these arguments in a series of earlier articles, 'Saint-Simonism in England', in *The Twentieth Century*, 152 (1952), 499-512, and 'Saint-Simonism in England: II', in *The Twentieth Century*, 153 (1953), 47-58.

published in 1970, Peter N. Farrar argued that Saint-Simonism left little discernible trace on Carlyle and other British thinkers.¹¹ In sum, while some historians suggested that Carlyle had responded favourably to the Saint-Simonians during the early 1830s, and also made use of certain Saint-Simonian ideas in his later writings, they did not demonstrate this conclusively. Moreover, as Kenneth Fielding, one of the editors of Carlyle's *Collected Letters*, pointed out in 1976, Shine's study of 'historical periodicity' had 'left unbalanced the general question of the relations of Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians'.¹² As Fielding made clear, the preparation of the *Collected Letters*, which had begun in 1970, and which is still ongoing today, had yielded a huge amount of new information on the subject, and would most likely continue to do so.¹³ Perhaps most significantly, it had revealed exactly which Saint-Simonian texts Carlyle possessed, something unknown to previous commentators. In light of such developments, Fielding underlined the limitations of the extant literature, stating that 'further attempts need to be made'.¹⁴ To date, that is, some forty years later, no one has taken up Fielding's challenge. Indeed, despite the fact that recent years have seen the publication of several major, book-length studies of Carlyle, none of these have told us anything new about Saint-Simonism.¹⁵ In sum, there is no comprehensive, detailed study of the contribution of Saint-Simonism to the political thought of Thomas Carlyle, and this is, ultimately, the justification and rationale of the following thesis. Furthermore, as the editors of a recent collection of essays have made clear, 'more work needs to be done' in 'addressing' Carlyle's 'political ideas' more generally, particularly given his central status to the thought of the Victorian period.¹⁶

In approaching the subject, there is certainly no shortage of source material. To the contrary, the historian is confronted by an embarrassment of riches. These are, however, in some state of disarray. While there are numerous editions of Carlyle's 'works', each running to somewhere

11 Peter N. Farrar, 'Le saint-simonisme en Angleterre', in *Economies et sociétés. Cahiers de l'I.S.E.A.*, IV:10 (1970), 1986, 1991-1992

12 Kenneth J. Fielding, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians (1830-1832): New Considerations', in *Carlyle and his Contemporaries*, ed. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 35-59 (36-37).

13 *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-).

14 Fielding, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians', 36-37.

15 For instance, A. L. Le Quesne, in his *Carlyle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), gives the Saint-Simonians one paragraph, noting that Carlyle's association with them was 'short-lived' (28). Fred Kaplan's *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), which runs to almost six hundred pages, has two pages on Saint-Simonism (154-155). Kaplan quotes some excerpts from Carlyle's letters to the Saint-Simonians during the early 1830s, and then moves on. Simon Heffer, in his *Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), has little to say about Saint-Simonism, other than that 'Carlyle's association with the sect was, in light of his later philosophies, bizarre' (110). In the latest survey of Carlyle's political thought, John Morrow's *Thomas Carlyle* (London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), Saint-Simonism receives four dismissive sentences, two in footnotes (102, 162, 238 [n], 244 [n]).

16 Paul E. Kerry and Marylu Hill, 'Introduction', in *Thomas Carlyle Resartus: Reappraising Carlyle's Contribution to the Philosophy of History, Political Theory, and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Kerry and Hill (Teaneck NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), 13-29 (15).

between thirty and forty volumes, each containing hundreds of closely-printed, narrow-margined pages, none of these is anything like 'complete'. Fortunately, many of the missing articles and miscellanea, particularly those by the 'young' Carlyle, were printed posthumously in other editions, listed in the bibliography to this thesis. Moreover, numerous extracts from Carlyle's journals, which are now in private hands, and thus beyond the grasp of the historian, were published in J. A. Froude's seminal biography, *Thomas Carlyle* (1882-84), which, for this reason alone, remains indispensable to students of Carlyle.¹⁷ More recently, various manuscripts have also been brought to light, being published in specialist journals, such as the *Carlyle Newsletter*.¹⁸ Finally, the *Collected Letters* currently stands at forty volumes (up to 1864), and continues to grow. However, for Carlyle's later letters (he died in 1881), it is still necessary to return to older editions of his correspondence. In total, Carlyle produced something approaching one hundred volumes of text.

Despite the challenges posed by so formidable a corpus, this thesis aims to read Carlyle's entire oeuvre both comprehensively and closely. Regrettably, previous scholars have tended to stick to incomplete editions of the 'works', which begin with the *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, the first of which appeared when Carlyle was in his early thirties. The result is that everything Carlyle wrote prior to this time is ignored. For instance, one recent commentator has dismissed the young Carlyle's first forays into literature, his contributions to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, as 'mere badly paid hackwork, brief factual accounts of various encyclopedia headings chosen by the accident of the alphabet'.¹⁹ Fortunately, such neglect has not been entirely universal. For instance, in his *Sartor Called Resartus* (1965), G. B. Tennyson successfully traced the stylistic continuities that existed between these early encyclopedia entries and Carlyle's later 'literary artistry'.²⁰ In the following thesis, I will endeavour to do much the same for Carlyle's political thought. While Carlyle might not have chosen the subjects of his encyclopedia entries, he did choose his sources, and how to interpret, structure, and present the information the latter yielded. For this reason, the entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, along with other early writings, are invaluable in affording us an idea of the political languages with which the young Carlyle was acquainted, and which would provide the foundations of his later political thought. Moreover, neglect of Carlyle's early writings has generally been accompanied by a corresponding disregard of his later works. Philip Rosenberg, for instance,

17 On the fate of Carlyle's journals, see Ian Campbell, 'James Barrett and Carlyle's Journal', in *Notes and Queries*, 17:1 (1970), 19-21.

18 An indispensable finding resource is Rodger L. Tarr, *Thomas Carlyle: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Pittsburgh PA: University Of Pittsburgh Press, 1989).

19 Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 61. Similarly, Le Quesne refers to these articles as 'the merest journalistic hackwork' (*Carlyle*, 7-8).

20 G. B. Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus: The Genesis, Structure, and Style of Thomas Carlyle's First Major Work* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 5, 28-39.

freely admitted to ignoring everything Carlyle wrote after *Past and Present* (1843), on the grounds that he found these later writings boring.²¹ Perhaps no work has suffered more from this disregard than Carlyle's sprawling, multi-voluminous biography of *Frederick the Great* (1858-65). As Morse Peckham pointed out, it can be 'difficult to write about' Carlyle's *Frederick*, simply because 'almost no one has read it'.²² However, while it is possible to dismiss these later writings as derivative and repetitive, they in fact contain a number of important clarifications of ideas that Carlyle had expressed in earlier texts, as well as responses to the criticisms of his contemporaries. Furthermore, as Kenneth Fielding has recently shown, Carlyle, in later life, did not quite become a bitter, cynical, lonely old man, or at least not to the extent commonly supposed in the existing secondary literature.²³ To the contrary, he continued to take an active interest in contemporary political affairs, and, despite crippling arthritis in his right hand, continued to write.²⁴ As the following chapters will suggest, even these 'prehumous' writings are worthy of consideration. In sum, there is no getting round the need for a comprehensive reading of Carlyle's oeuvre.

However, with regard to primary sources, this is only the beginning of the question. In addition to Carlyle's texts, there is, of course, the 'context'. From the perspective of this thesis, the most important context is of course provided by the relevant writings of the Saint-Simonians. A group of early French socialists active during the 1820s and 1830s, the Saint-Simonians also produced a great deal of text. Fortunately, thanks to the editors of Carlyle's *Collected Letters*, we now know exactly which publications Carlyle possessed.²⁵ These will be listed in the second half of this introductory chapter, which recounts the story of Carlyle's encounter with the Saint-Simonians. In order to see Saint-Simonism as far as possible from Carlyle's own perspective, the subsequent chapters will be based solely on these specific publications, and will avoid dragging in other texts that Carlyle had not read.²⁶ At the time of his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians in 1830, Carlyle was relatively well-informed regarding recent developments in French political thought, and, for this reason, certain chapters, in discussing the relevant Saint-Simonian texts, will also

21 Philip Rosenberg *The Seventh Hero: Thomas Carlyle and the Theory of Radical Activism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), x. Despite this shortcoming, the book is otherwise very useful.

22 Morse Peckham, 'Frederick the Great', in *Carlyle Past and Present: A Collection of New Essays*, ed. K. J. Fielding and Rodger L. Tarr (London: Vision Press, 1976), 198-215 (198).

23 Kenneth J. Fielding, 'Justice to Carlyle's Memory: The Later Carlyle', in *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, ed. D. R. Sorensen and R. L. Tarr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 1-14.

24 In a letter dated 1871, Carlyle informed his sister that, since the mid-1860s, his 'right hand [had] been getting useless for writing' (TC to Janet Hanning, 13th Feb. 1871, in *Letters of Thomas Carlyle to His Youngest Sister*, ed. C. T. Copeland [Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899], 240).

25 Fielding, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians', 39, 47-48; TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 9th Aug. 1830, *CL* 5:134-139; TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 17th May 1831, *CL* 5:276-280.

26 Moreover, relatively little attention will be paid to the recent secondary literature on Saint-Simonism, which, of course, Carlyle had not read either.

provide a brief outline of the French context. However, throughout this thesis, the primary intention is not to provide a history of Saint-Simonism, but rather of what Carlyle did with a series of Saint-Simonian concepts, in a specifically British context.

In attempting to do this, I have made free use of an array of theoretical and methodological tools, which now ought to be briefly specified. The first is the *Begriffsgeschichte*, or 'history of concepts', most commonly associated with the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, and the vast conceptual lexicon composed under his auspices, the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*.²⁷ One noted anglophone historian has criticised conceptual historians for being 'systematically addicted to dissolving the languages they study into the "concepts" of which these languages are compounded', and there does seem to be some danger of reproducing the kind of de-contextualised, free-floating 'unit-ideas' or 'key words' once advocated by Arthur Lovejoy and Raymond Williams.²⁸ However, as Koselleck emphasised, *Begriffsgeschichte* was expressly intended to avoid this tendency, represented in Germany by *Ideengeschichte*.²⁹ In contrast, as both Hans Erich Bödeker and Willibald Steinmetz have recently pointed out, conceptual historians sought rather to deal with the use of concepts by specific agents, in specific situations, and as part of wider contexts, discourses and semantic fields.³⁰ Accordingly, each chapter of this thesis will deal with a particular Saint-Simonian concept (or, in the case of chapter 4, a metaphor), and the use that Carlyle made of it in a specifically British context.³¹ Together, it is hoped that these concepts will amount to something approaching a 'language' or a 'discourse'.

Of course, studying the appropriation of French concepts by a British writer makes this thesis 'transnational'. For this reason, I have sought to combine some of the insights of *Begriffsgeschichte*

27 *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Brunner, Conze and Koselleck, 8 Vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972-1997).

28 The words are those of J. G. A. Pocock, 'Concepts and Discourses: A Difference in Culture?', in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, ed. Richter (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 1996), 50. On 'unit-ideas', see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* [1936] (New Brunswick NJ and London: Transaction, 2009), 1-23, and idem, 'Reflections on the History of Ideas', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1:1 (1940), 3-23. On 'keywords', see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [1976], rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

29 Reinhart Koselleck, 'A Response to Comments on the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*', in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts*, 61-62.

30 Hans Erich Bödeker, 'Reflexionen über Begriffsgeschichte als Methode', in *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, ed. Bödeker (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2002), 73-121, and Willibald Steinmetz, 'Vierzig Jahre Begriffsgeschichte', in *Sprache-Kognition-Kultur*, ed. Kämper and Eichinger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 182-183.

31 On the history of metaphors, see Rüdiger Zill, '»Substrukturen des Denkens«: Grenzen und Perspektiven einer Metapherngeschichte nach Hans Blumenberg', in *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, ed. Bödeker, 244-247. On Carlyle as metaphor aficionado, see Mary B. Deaton, 'Thomas Carlyle's Use of Metaphor', in *College English*, 5:6 (1944), 314-318.

with various theories regarding 'cultural transfer'. In contrast to earlier studies of 'influence', which assumed the person being 'influenced' to be largely passive, historians of 'cultural transfer' stress how foreign ideas are transformed through active, creative appropriation, and by integration into domestic debates.³² Indeed, it is possible to combine *Begriffsgeschichte* with the study of 'cultural transfer', in what several recent historians have referred to as 'conceptual transfer'.³³ Accordingly, each chapter of what follows will chart the 'transfer' of a particular Saint-Simonian 'concept', and the active, creative use that Carlyle made of it within peculiarly British debates. Within each chapter, I adopt a broadly chronological approach, seeking to elucidate how Carlyle transformed the Saint-Simonian concept in question through use in successive debates, and also as a means to track its shifting reception amongst Carlyle's readers. The price to pay for this chronological approach is a degree of repetition within certain chapters, but, in the end, I feel that this is a price worth paying.

It is hoped that these predominantly German and French approaches will prove compatible with the kind of 'contextualism' that is by now the common sense within anglophone history of political thought.³⁴ As noted above, Carlyle's entire oeuvre is immense, amounting to somewhere around one hundred volumes. Deciding to write a 'book about Carlyle', one might wade into this morass without further ado. However, there will come a point at which one has to start making sense of the source material, deciding what deserves to go into the book and what doesn't, and choosing how to order and structure what does. If one has rarely strayed far from Carlyle's writings themselves, then one will have little choice but to interpret, select, and structure in accordance with one's own prejudices, assumptions, enthusiasms and hobby-horses. Similarly, one might choose to interpret Carlyle through the distorting prism of various modern and post-modern 'theories' (preferably French, if at all possible). Notably, such approaches tended to disfigure many of the 'New Left' studies of Carlyle that appeared during the 1960s. To unfairly single in on one author, Albert LaValley, in his *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern* (1968), decided to 'apply' Thomas Mann's theory of the 'pessimistic humanist' 'to Carlyle', referred to 'Carlyle's heirs – Nietzsche, D. H. Lawrence, and... Norman Mailer', and claimed that Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* 'resemble[d]' not only 'André Gide's *The*

32 For an introduction see Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999), 20-26.

33 See Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt, 'Histoire des concepts et transferts culturels, 1770-1815. Note sur une recherche', in *Genèses*, 14 (1994), 27-41, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 'Conceptual History and Conceptual Transfer: The Case of 'Nation' in Revolutionary France and Germany', in *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* ed. I. Hampsher-Monk, K. Tilmans, and F. van Vree (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 121, and Thomas Fiegle, *Von der Solidarität zur Solidarität: Ein französisch-deutscher Begriffstransfer* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003), esp. 12-26.

34 See generally the essays collected in Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Vol. 1, 'Regarding Method', and J. G. A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Counterfeiters', but also, 'more recently, Fellini's movie "8½".³⁵ In the end, such statements tell us far more about Albert LaValley than they do about Carlyle. Or, alternatively, one might rely upon some of the common-places, hearsays, and compounded myths of Victorian history (in Carlyle's case, terms such as 'Romantic', 'Tory Radical', 'Reactionary', and 'Racist'). In my opinion, all these approaches ultimately issue in idiosyncrasy, arbitrariness, and anachronism, and, so far as a strictly historical understanding is concerned, usually end up obscuring far more than they reveal. However, there is a solution. In what follows, I do my best to lay aside my own prejudices, modern 'theories', and terms such as 'Tory Radical'. Instead, I attempt to reconstruct the context of Carlyle's writings, that is, the sources on which he drew, the debates and controversies in which he participated, and the ways in which his contemporaries responded to his works. This, in my opinion, is the only sure route to an accurate historical understanding of what Carlyle meant. Moreover, it is also the only way to understand *why* Carlyle was interested in Saint-Simonism, that is, what it enabled him to do in a British context, that he would not otherwise have been able to do. Indeed, this is one of the central shortcomings of the existing studies of the subject, most of which were greatly deficient in context. Thus, each chapter of this thesis will analyse the 'transfer' of a Saint-Simonian 'concept', but always within a wider *context*.

One form of context is a 'language' or a 'discourse'.³⁶ Without pre-empting the content of the following chapters, it is worth briefly giving the reader a sense of what kinds of 'languages' and 'discourses' will feature in the latter.³⁷ Generally, an attempt will be made to downplay the significance of two 'languages' that have tended to dominate studies of Carlyle's political thought. The first is that of 'Calvinism'. As one distinguished Carlyle scholar, Kenneth Fielding, recently remarked, with more than a hint of weariness: 'A problem in writing about Carlyle and his beliefs is that people think they know what they are. He was a "Calvinist"'.³⁸ Given the sheer pervasiveness of 'Calvinism' in the secondary literature, the theme merits some elaboration here. Following Carlyle's death in 1881, the details of his Scottish Calvinist upbringing became publicly available, through the medium of his own posthumously published *Reminiscences*, and, shortly thereafter, J. A. Froude's biography, *Thomas Carlyle* (1882-84). Seemingly, it was from this point onward that references to 'Calvinism' began to creep into commentaries on Carlyle's thought. For instance, in an

35 Albert J. LaValley, *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern: Studies in Carlyle's Prophetic Literature and its Relation to Blake, Nietzsche, Marx, and Others* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 66-67, 107, 113, 117.

36 See generally Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*.

37 More detailed reviews of the existing secondary literature will be found in the introductions to subsequent chapters.

38 Kenneth J. Fielding, 'A Skeptical Elegy as in Auchertool Kirkyard', in *Literature and Belief*, 25:1-2 (2005), 239-258 (239).

article published in 1881, Julia Wedgwood cited at length from Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, claiming that these threw 'a great deal of light on his relation to Puritanism', and asserting that 'though Carlyle was never, in a religious sense, a Calvinist', 'his strong sympathy with the traditional creed of his country left its influence on his political creed'.³⁹ Similarly, around the same time, in his *Hours in a Library*, Leslie Stephen also referred to Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, adducing these as proof that Carlyle was at bottom 'a Calvinist who had dropped the dogmas... what remained for Carlyle was the characteristic temper of mind and the whole mode of regarding the universe'.⁴⁰ During the 1930s, this thesis was elevated to the status of self-evident truth by the American scholar C. F. Harrold, who concluded that Carlyle was ultimately 'a Calvinist shorn of his theology'.⁴¹ Since then, it has been cited, re-cited, and re-cited again in the secondary literature.⁴² To cite only a few representative examples, Ernst Cassirer, in 1946, claimed that 'Carlyle's political theory is, at bottom, nothing short of a disguised and transformed Calvinism', while George Levine, in 1968, accused Carlyle of propounding 'a myopic and often brutal secular Calvinism'.⁴³ More recently, Ian Campbell has insisted that the personal example of Carlyle's father, a 'Calvinist', ran 'like a ground bass' through his later writings, as did 'the early and ineffaceable teaching of the Burgher Secession community' (the church to which the Carlyle family belonged).⁴⁴ Similarly, A. L. Le Quesne has claimed that Carlyle's 'whole personality [was] coloured by the sternly disciplined piety of Scottish Calvinism, a tradition which he outgrew intellectually but never spiritually'.⁴⁵ Clearly, one would not wish to deny that Carlyle's upbringing, and the personal example of his father, exerted a formative influence upon his personality and 'temper of mind'. However, there is a huge leap from this admission to the claim that Carlyle's political *ideas* were in some sense 'Calvinist'. As Kenneth Fielding has pointed out, this has become something of a 'bad habit' amongst Carlyle scholars, who are prone 'to ascribe what are really national or personal characteristics to something vaguely called "Calvinism"'.⁴⁶

However, as Fielding has noted elsewhere, 'Carlyle's contemporaries often had a much clearer

39 [Wedgwood, Julia], 'A Study of Carlyle', in *Contemporary Review*, XXXIX (Apr. 1881), 585-609 (596-597, 602, 607).

40 Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, new ed., (London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1892), III:279-280.

41 Charles Frederick Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought, 1819-1834* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1934), 7, 216-224, 237. See also 28, 67, 111, 155. For a succinct statement, see Harrold, 'The Nature of Carlyle's Calvinism', in *Studies in Philology*, 33:3 (1936), 475-486.

42 For fuller reviews of the secondary literature, see the introductions to chapters 2 and 5.

43 Cassirer, 'The Preparation: Carlyle', in his *The Myth of the State*, 193; George Levine, *The Boundaries of Fiction: Carlyle, Macaulay, Newman* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 21.

44 Ian Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle* [1974], new ed. (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 1993), 2, 8. See also Campbell, 'Carlyle's Religion: The Scottish Background', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, ed. J. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 4-20 (4).

45 Le Quesne, *Carlyle*, 2.

46 Fielding, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians', 56-57.

grasp'.⁴⁷ Contrary to the assumptions of historians and other more recent commentators, Carlyle's ideas were not understood by his contemporaries (who, after all, knew relatively little about his childhood) to be, in any sense, indebted to 'Calvinism'. For instance, recent commentators such as Campbell often cite Carlyle's reminiscence of his father, written in January 1832, as proof of his 'Calvinist' bias.⁴⁸ However, visiting Carlyle the following year, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his journal that 'Carlyle almost grudges the poor peasant his Calvinism'.⁴⁹ Several years later, in 1840, F. D. Maurice, in an article published in the *Educational Magazine*, argued that Carlyle harboured an 'hereditary antipathy' toward the Church of England, 'which he cherishes so much the more fondly because it is almost *the only* remaining point of sympathy with those from whom it has been derived'.⁵⁰ Again, in 1843, Maurice, in a private letter, deplored the 'Eclecticism' of Carlyle and Emerson, exclaiming: 'Oh, there is nothing so emasculating as the atmosphere of Eclecticism! Who that has dwelt in it has not longed for the keen mountain misty air of Calvinism [?]'.⁵¹ Thus, such contemporaries did not consider Carlyle to be sympathetic to 'Calvinism', and even implied that he was somehow hostile to it. This argument will be developed at much greater length in chapters 1 and 4, which attempt a contextualised reassessment of Carlyle's ideas regarding work and authority, arguing that these owed far more to ancient Greek and Roman sources than they did to 'Scottish Calvinism', and that this was readily recognised by contemporaries. Indeed, one benefit of reconstructing the context of Carlyle's thought is that it helps to shift the dead weight of such shortbread-box clichés.

The second language that will be relatively downplayed is that of German literature and philosophy. This, in my opinion, did play a considerable role in Carlyle's writings, particularly during the 1820s, prior to his encounter with the Saint-Simonians in 1830. However, it has already been the subject of several excellent book-length studies, and features prominently in most general surveys of Carlyle's thought.⁵² Moreover, it is widely recognised that Carlyle's interest in German literature and philosophy discernibly diminished during the early 1830s, that is, around the time of his encounter with the Saint-Simonians. For instance, A. L. Le Quesne has noted that Carlyle at this

47 Fielding, 'A Skeptical Elegy as in Auchertool Kirkyard', 239 (n).

48 E.g. Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle*, 2, 8, 42-45, 51-53.

49 Emerson, journal entry dated 8th Sep. 1833, in *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes (Boston MA and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909-1914), III:198-199.

50 F. D. Maurice, 'Chartism', in *Educational Magazine* (8th June 1840), reprinted in *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice, chiefly told by his own letters*, ed. F. Maurice (London: Macmillan and Co., 1884), I:278. My italics.

51 Maurice to David Macmillan, in *ibid.*, I:338-339.

52 See notably Charles Frederick Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1934); Ruth apRoberts, *The Ancient Dialect: Thomas Carlyle and Comparative Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Elizabeth M. Vida, *Romantic Affinities: German Authors and Carlyle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Rosemary Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought, 1800-1860* (London: Libris, 1994), ch. 2.

time began to turn toward social and political criticism, 'not something he had learned from the Germans', while G. B. Tennyson points out that *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34) 'stands as the capstone of his career as a professional German zealot'.⁵³ Given the focus of the present thesis, what matters is the way in which German literature and philosophy provide a background to Carlyle's subsequent engagement with Saint-Simonism. First, as recent research has shown, the Saint-Simonians were in fact reading the same German literature as Carlyle.⁵⁴ Thus, as the second half of this chapter will make clear, Carlyle, in his letters to the Saint-Simonians, claimed to have found in their writings many ideas he had already encountered elsewhere. In this sense, it seems probable that German literature served to facilitate and mediate the exchange between Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians.⁵⁵ Second, in a lecture delivered in 1838, Carlyle stated that 'the men who constructed German literature' sought only the 'enfranchisement of their own souls', and 'as to their particular doctrines, there [was] nothing definite to be said'.⁵⁶ As Warren Breckman has recently shown, Saint-Simonism enabled many German thinkers to translate a vague pantheism into a definite social and political programme, and, in the following chapters, it will be suggested that this was no less true of Carlyle.⁵⁷ Indeed, contemporaries were quick to perceive affinities and continuities between the thought of the Germans, Carlyle, and the Saint-Simonians. Particularly worthy of mention in this regard is an article that appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1832, in the form of an imagined dialogue between Goethe and 'Oliver Yorke'. In it, Goethe begins by setting out his own ideas on reverence, as presented in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, a novel that Carlyle had recently translated into English. Goethe subsequently remarks that 'Thomas Carlyle has a deep critical soul', and recommends that 'his life of Schiller is worth reading'. He then begins to discourse upon Saint-Simonism, at which point 'Oliver Yorke' interjects, remarking that 'St. Simon, I believe, confesses his obligations to the

53 Le Quesne, *Carlyle*, 26; Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, 67. See also Fielding, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians', 40-41: 'It is as if those who best understood Carlyle's debt to the Germans have been reluctant to see how his views were changing'.

54 On the Saint-Simonians and German thought, see Michel Espagne, 'Le saint-simonisme est-il jeune-hégélien?', in *Regards sur le saint-simonisme et les saint-simoniens*, ed. Derré (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1986), 45-71, and Philippe Régner, 'Les saint-simoniennes et la philosophie allemande ou la première alliance intellectuelle franco-allemande', *Revue de Synthèse*, 4:2 (1988), 231-245.

55 This might, somewhat jargonistically, be termed a 'triangular transfer'. See Espagne, *Les transferts culturels*, ch. 8. C.f. Jonathan Mendilow, who dismisses Saint-Simonism out of hand, stating that Carlyle belonged to 'the same geological formation as that of the great English and German romantics' (*The Romantic Tradition in British Political Thought* [London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986], 124-125). However, there is no need to pose the matter in such either / or terms. German writers might have prepared Carlyle for Saint-Simonism, and German ideas might have continued to exist in Carlyle's writings alongside Saint-Simonian ones.

56 *Lectures on the History of Literature* [Apr.-July 1838], ed. Greene (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1892), 201.

57 Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory: Dethroning the Self* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 161-164. There is by now a large literature on the reception and appropriation of Saint-Simonism in Germany. A good starting point is Norbert Waszek, 'Saint-Simonismus und Hegelianismus: Einführung in das Forschungsfeld', in *Hegelianismus und Saint-Simonismus*, ed. H.-C. Schmidt am Busch, L. Siep, H.-U. Thamer and N. Waszek (Paderborn: Mentis, 2007), 13-35. There is no comparable literature on the reception and appropriation of Saint-Simonism in Britain.

philosophers of your country'. Goethe then proceeds to outline the social and political doctrines of the Saint-Simonians.⁵⁸

Having downplayed 'Calvinism' and 'German literature', the subsequent chapters will attempt to bring to the fore a number of other languages, all of which have been largely overlooked in the existing secondary literature. Carlyle, of course, rarely acknowledged his sources, since this would have diminished his standing as a 'prophet', 'seer', 'sage', and so on. However, his contemporaries often pointed out that he was not nearly as avant-garde as he would have liked to believe. For instance, in 1828, Francis Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, told Carlyle that 'the great source of your extravagance, and of all that makes your writings intolerable to many and ridiculous to not a few, is not so much any real peculiarity of opinions, as an unlucky ambition to appear more original than you are'.⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1843, one reviewer opined that Carlyle's readers were prone 'to mistake originality of expression for novelty of thought', adding that if Carlyle's books were to be 'translated into ordinary English', then it would become apparent that 'his leading ideas were already *publici juris*'.⁶⁰ And, to cite one final example, in 1849, another reviewer complained that were some readers for whom Carlyle's 'touch' sufficed 'to convert the veriest commonplaces into something strikingly novel'.⁶¹ In this sense, the following chapters will be, to a large extent, an exercise in debunking. However, throughout, the aim is not to deny the fact that Carlyle was a creative thinker. Instead, it is to argue that he never created *ex nihilo*, but rather made use of the existing languages and discourses that lay to hand. In approaching Carlyle in this manner, it is hoped that this thesis will help to liberate him from the excessive demands of originality (both negatively and positively conceived), imputed to him by far too many Carlyle scholars.

One language that will feature prominently in the following chapters is the 'classical', that is, the political languages and ideas of ancient Greece and Rome. As one commentator pointed out in

58 [William Maginn] 'Oliver Yorke at Home: A Dialogue with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe', in *Fraser's Magazine*, V (Feb. 1832), 29-33.

59 Jeffrey to Carlyle, 1828, cited in James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of His Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), II:31. The previous year, Jeffrey had written: 'You are, to say it in one word, a *Sectary*... [you tend] to magnify the distinguishing doctrines of your sect, and rather to aggravate than reconcile the differences which divide [you] from the Establishment' (Jeffrey to TC, 6th Sep. 1827, in *The Letters of Francis Jeffrey to Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. W. Christie [London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008], 4).

60 'Past and Present. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The Athenæum*, no. 811 (13th May 1843), 453-454 (453). The same year, the political economist Nassau Senior told Macvey Napier, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, that Carlyle was 'full of bombast, affectation, conceit' (letter dated 20th Feb. 1843, in *Selection from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier* [London: Macmillan and Co., 1879], 424). Three years later, in 1846, another commentator lamented that the 'vice' of Carlyle's 'writings' was 'the crying evil of the day – the unpardonable offence of affectation' ('Thomas Carlyle – Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell', in *North British Review*, 4 [Feb. 1846], 505-536 [507-508]).

61 'Thomas Carlyle', in *The British Quarterly Review*, 10 (1st Aug. 1849), 1-45 (1).

1844, the 'force' of 'whole pages' of Carlyle's works 'may be lost, if the reader happens to be ignorant of some classical allusion'.⁶² Similarly, some years later, in 1858, a reviewer wrote that 'Carlyle's allusions to the old classics, mythological or historical, were plentiful as blackberries'.⁶³ Alas, although the harvest here is plentiful, the labourer is barbarous and inept, and I can present the reader with but a slender punnet. In particular, chapter 1 will argue that Carlyle's ideas regarding work owed more to the Greek and Roman Stoics than they did to 'Calvinism', and chapters 3 and 4 will stress Carlyle's debts to Plato, particularly in his critique of democracy, and his advocacy of a new aristocracy. Of course, this is only to scratch the surface of Carlyle's classical inheritance, but it is at least a start, particularly given that the subject has been almost entirely overlooked in the existing secondary literature. Indeed, it is hoped that this thesis will serve as a spur to further investigations and studies.

A related language, or perhaps dialect, is that of 'republicanism', this having been a central object of inquiry within anglophone history of political thought during recent decades. In this regard, it is remarkable that Carlyle's friend Charles Gavan Duffy once described him as 'an English republican of the school of Milton and Cromwell'.⁶⁴ Similarly, in *Alton Locke*, Charles Kingsley's novel of 1850, a character based on Carlyle, 'Sandy Mackaye', is to be found with his nose buried 'in Harrington's *Oceana*', extolling (in absurd 'Scotch' accent) "the gran' auld Roman times, when folks didna care for themselves, but for the nation".⁶⁵ Until fairly recently, scholarly writing on republicanism has shown a distinct democratic bias, stressing notions of 'non-domination' (by arbitrary authority) and 'active participation' (by citizens in law-making, and the political process more generally).⁶⁶ For this reason, it might at first seem somewhat counter-intuitive to describe Carlyle, a notorious authoritarian, as a 'republican'. However, we ought to bear in mind the following words of Carlyle's disciple John Ruskin, which are worth quoting at some length:

the terms "republic" and "democracy" are confused, especially in modern use... A republic means, properly, a polity in which the state, with its all, is at every man's service, and every man, with his all, at the state's service... all forms of government are good just so far as they attain this one vital necessity of policy - that the wise and kind, few or many, shall govern

⁶² 'Carlyle's Past and Present', in *New Englander and Yale Review*, 2 (Jan. 1844), 25-39 (26).

⁶³ 'Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great', in *New Monthly Magazine*, 114 (1858), 253-271 (267).

⁶⁴ Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle*, 133; *The Times* (6th Oct. 1843).

⁶⁵ Charles Kingsley, *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet* [1850], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., n.d.), 74-75, 87-88. Mackaye's "favourite books were Thomas Carlyle's works".

⁶⁶ Two notable examples are Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

the unwise and unkind... if there be many foolish persons in a state, and few wise, then it is good that the few govern; and if there be many wise and few foolish, then it is good that many govern; and if many be wise, yet one wiser, then it is good that one should govern.⁶⁷

Here, Ruskin was closely paraphrasing Book III of Aristotle's *Politics*.⁶⁸ Indeed, the more recent scholarly literature on republicanism has begun to emphasise the more authoritarian or aristocratic strands of the tradition, particularly those stemming from the writings of Plato and Aristotle. These did not particularly value 'active participation', and took it for granted that the vicious and the ignorant ought to be 'dominated' by the virtuous and the wise, if only for their own good.⁶⁹ In chapter 4, it will be argued that Carlyle was an aristocratic republican, and that his ideas regarding authority owed far more to this tradition than they did to 'Calvinism'. Moreover, recent literature on republicanism has also begun to draw attention to what we might call 'quality of agency', that is, the kind of moral attributes that are necessary to good citizenship. Particularly important in this regard is 'propriety' or 'self-mastery', that is, mastery over one's own selfish passions, and an ability and willingness to put the public good before one's own private interests.⁷⁰ Again, in chapters 3 and 4, it will be argued that such ideas were central to Carlyle's political thought.

In addition to the 'classical' and the 'republican', another language that will play a prominent role in subsequent chapters is that of the 'Scottish Enlightenment'. Conventionally, the intellectual history of the Victorian era has assumed a strict separation between the eighteenth century ('rationalism', 'enlightenment', etc.) and the nineteenth ('romanticism'). Indeed, the writings of Carlyle bear a large part of the responsibility for such misconceptions. In particular, Carlyle continually belittled the thinkers of the eighteenth century, while noisily, insistently proclaiming his own originality.⁷¹ However, as one reviewer pointed out in 1859, in making such derogatory remarks, Carlyle

67 John Ruskin, 'Essays on Political Economy' [1862-1863], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays on Political Economy* (London: J. M. Dent / New York: E. P. Dutton, 1907), 278-280.

68 Aristotle, 'The Politics', in *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 71.

69 Most notably, Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Other relevant studies are Gregory Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), and Iain McDaniel, *Adam Ferguson in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Roman Past and Europe's Future* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

70 Particularly useful are Duncan Kelly, *The Propriety of Liberty: Persons, Passions and Judgement in Modern Political Thought* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), and Douglas Moggach, 'Republican Rigorism and Emancipation in Bruno Bauer', in *The New Hegelians: Politics and Philosophy in the Hegelian School*, ed. Moggach (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 114-135.

71 On the Victorian construction of 'the eighteenth century', see generally Brian Young, *The Victorian Eighteenth Century: An Intellectual History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

really show[ed] ingratitude of no ordinary kind, after having borrowed by far the greater portion of his own spiritual culture from minds like those of Schiller, Goethe, Herder, Fichte, Jean Paul, Lessing, Voltaire, Diderot, Mirabeau, Burns, and Johnson, to denounce their epoch with such extravagant incoherence.⁷²

Educated at the University of Edinburgh at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, the young Carlyle was in fact steeped in the writings of the 'Scottish Enlightenment'. For instance, upon his arrival in Edinburgh, he promptly read through the entire back catalogue of the *Edinburgh Review*, a periodical which, as Biancamaria Fontana has reminded us, functioned as a 'receptacle for the heritage of the Scottish Enlightenment'.⁷³ Indeed, part of the value of studying Carlyle's very first publications, such as his contributions to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, is that it makes manifest his debts to the much despised 'eighteenth century'. For a long time, these debts were neglected in the secondary literature, which tended to take Carlyle's claims to originality at face value. However, more recently, Ralph Jessop has made a salutary effort to elucidate Carlyle's borrowings from 'Scottish thought', particularly 'as articulated in the Common-Sense philosophy of Thomas Reid'.⁷⁴ However, Jessop focused exclusively on Common-Sense philosophy, and dealt only with Carlyle's writings up until 1834.⁷⁵ Furthermore, as Jessop made clear in his conclusion, far from 'effecting a closure on debate', he hoped rather to invite 'further discussion' regarding 'Scottish thought in relation to Carlyle'.⁷⁶ In the following thesis, I will seek to broaden the scope of inquiry to the social, political, and historical thought of the 'Scottish Enlightenment', arguing that these continued to obtain a resonance in Carlyle's writings far beyond 1834. In chapters 2 and 5, for instance, it will be argued that, despite his protestations to originality, 'Scottish Enlightenment' notions of 'progress' remained central to Carlyle's later historical and imperial writings. Moreover, in chapters 1 and 3, it will be argued that Carlyle's concept of virtue, and his criticisms of 'democracy', can only be fully understood as reactions against the Epicurean utilitarianism of his Scottish predecessors.

These, then, are some of the wider languages, or discourses, that will serve to contextualise Carlyle's appropriation and use of Saint-Simonian concepts. However, in addition to these broad

72 'Carlyle's *Frederic the Great*', in, *The Edinburgh Review*, 110 (Oct. 1859), 376-410 (377).

73 Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, 134-135; Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review 1802-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 4. Fontana briefly touches upon Carlyle's early association with the review (173-176).

74 Ralph Jessop, *Carlyle and Scottish Thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 1. More recently, Jessop has also suggested that Carlyle was similarly indebted to the 'agnosticism' of William Hamilton. See Jessop 'Carlyle's Agnosticism: An Altar to the Unknown and Unknowable God', in *Literature and Belief*, 25:1-2 (2005), 381-433, esp. p. 398-411.

75 As Jessop made clear in his preface to *Carlyle and Scottish Thought*, x-xi.

76 Jessop, *Carlyle and Scottish Thought*, 196-197.

languages, another form of context will be provided by some of the more specific debates and controversies in which Carlyle participated. In this regard, a greater emphasis will be placed on individual agency, that is, on the 'speech acts' of, on the one hand, Carlyle, and, on the other, of his various sources, interlocutors, and adversaries.⁷⁷ One notable interlocutor will be John Stuart Mill, who, aside from Carlyle, was perhaps the British intellectual most interested in Saint-Simonism.⁷⁸ Indeed, as Giorgio Lanaro has recently noted, it was a series of articles on Saint-Simonism, published by Mill in the *Examiner* in 1831, that first brought him into contact with Carlyle.⁷⁹ As Mill recalled in his *Autobiography*, 'as long as [the] public teachings and proselytism [of the Saint-Simonians] continued, I read nearly everything they wrote', and it was a series of articles written by Mill early in 1831, partly in response to Saint-Simonism, that first brought him into contact with Carlyle.⁸⁰ Over the following years they regularly spent time together, Carlyle being 'a frequent writer' in Mill's *London Review*.⁸¹ However, by 1838 Carlyle was writing to his brother that he now met with Mill but 'rarely: our paths diverge more and more'.⁸² By the late 1840s they no longer saw one another, though Carlyle, according to his friend Francis Espinasse, 'always spoke of Mill with a certain regard'.⁸³ In 1850, Mill famously published a sharply polemical attack on Carlyle's essay on the 'Negro Question', which previous commentators have tended to view this as an irreparable rupture.⁸⁴ However, while there were no doubt significant differences of opinion between Carlyle and Mill, these have perhaps been exaggerated. In 1851, shortly after the supposedly final break over the 'Negro Question', Carlyle told Charles Gavan Duffy that he 'could not account for this intimacy suddenly ending; neither had altered in fundamentals, nor were they further from agreeing than they had always been'.⁸⁵ In fact, the end of Carlyle and Mill's friendship seems to have been

77 See generally Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Vol. 1, 'Regarding Method'.

78 The older literature is somewhat patchy, but see Hill Shine, 'J. S. Mill and an Open Letter on the Saint-Simonian Society in 1832', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6:1 (1945), 103-108, J. R. Hains, 'John Stuart Mill and the Saint-Simonians', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 7:1 (1946), 103-112, Iris Wessel Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought* (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), ch. 3, and Pankhurst, *The Saint-Simonians, Mill and Carlyle*.

79 Giorgio Lanaro, *L' "Utopia Praticabile": John Stuart Mill e la scuola sansimoniana* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2003), 12-14, 42-44. Indeed, in a letter to John Sterling dated 20th / 22nd Oct. 1831, Mill wrote that the acquaintance and friendship of Carlyle had been the main dividend of these articles, entitled 'The Spirit of the Age' (52). Lanaro's study is far more comprehensive and detailed than the older literature cited in the previous note, and also makes use of Mill's *Collected Works*, which were not available to previous commentators. Lanaro also elucidates Mill's ongoing debts to the thought of the Saint-Simonians.

80 John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* [1873], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 137-149. For Carlyle's account of their first meeting, see TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 4th Sep. 1831, *CL* 5:397-398.

81 Mill, *Autobiography*, 174-175.

82 TC to John A. Carlyle, 18th July 1838, *CL* 10:127.

83 Francis Espinasse, *Literary Recollections and Sketches* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 218.

84 For Carlyle's response to the article, see TC to John A. Carlyle, 9th Jan. 1850, *CL* 25:1-2. Emery Neff, for instance, claimed that Carlyle increasingly embraced conservatism, despotism, and slavery, Mill continuing to defend 'freedom and individualism'. See *Carlyle and Mill: An Introduction to Victorian Thought* [1924], 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 37-44.

85 Charles Gavan Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), 166-170.

primarily due to personal, rather than political, reasons. In particular, Carlyle and his wife disapproved of Mill's relationship with Harriet Taylor (whom they disliked), and, as Fred Kaplan puts it, 'having declined intimacy with Harriet Taylor, the Carlyles were denied intimacy with Mill'.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, over subsequent years, Carlyle made several attempts to heal the rift with Mill, and was, in the end, deeply saddened to hear of his death.⁸⁷ In the following chapters, it will be argued that, despite their personal estrangement, and pronounced differences in style and rhetoric,⁸⁸ Carlyle and Mill continued to have much in common politically, and were in fact engaged in an ongoing, often sympathetic, dialogue with each other. Moreover, this becomes particularly clear if we bear in mind Mill's explicit adherence to 'a qualified Socialism', and particularly his debts to the Saint-Simonians.⁸⁹

Another important interlocutor will be John Ruskin, one of Carlyle's most tenacious defenders

86 Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 427. Carlyle and his wife Jane strongly disapproved of Mill's relationship with 'that woman, Mrs. Taylor' (*Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, ed. Sara Norton and M. A. DeWolfe Howe [Boston MA and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913], I:495-500; see also TC to John Sterling, 17th Jan. 1837, *CL* 9:115-120). Carlyle later admitted having made indiscreet remarks about the couple, concluding that these must have found their way back to Mill, who, some time around 1846, began to receive him 'like the very incarnation o' the East Wind' (*Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I:495-500). In 1851, the year of Mill and Taylor's marriage, Carlyle told Charles Gavan Duffy that: '[Taylor] was a shrewd woman, with a taste for coquetry, and she took possession of Mill and wrapped him up like a cocoon... Mrs. Carlyle, who was present, said Mrs. Mill was not the pink of womankind as her husband conceived, but a peculiarly affected and empty body... I [Duffy] suggested that if Mill had heard [t]his estimate of Mrs. Taylor, there need be no difficulty in accounting for the change [in Carlyle and Mill's relations]' (Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle*, 166-170; see also Carlyle, 'Jane Welsh Carlyle', in *Reminiscences*, ed. C. E. Norton, Everyman edition [London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972], 71-72). Moreover, during later life, both Mill, and, perhaps to a slightly lesser extent, Carlyle, began to withdraw from public life more generally. In 1840, the demise of the *London Review* enabled Mill, in his own words, to indulge his 'inclination' for 'limiting my own society to a very few persons' (Mill, *Autobiography*, 192). Around this time, Carlyle wrote to his brother regarding Mill that 'I am perhaps *oppressive* in the self-subsistence which he... very properly aims at' (TC to John A. Carlyle, 18th July 1838, *CL* 10:127). As Carlyle explained to acquaintances, the scandal surrounding Mill's relationship with Taylor served to further reinforce this tendency, Mill adopting 'a secluded monastic sort of life', and refusing to see anyone who would not do his wife 'absolute honour' (Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle*, 166-170; *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I:495-500). Indeed, Carlyle was subject to the same disposition, informing Mill in 1852: 'I respect your solitude; and indeed find it necessary myself to cultivate the same, as years grow upon me' (TC to JSM, 30th Apr. 1852, *CL* 27:98-99).

87 See for instance TC to JSM, 30th Apr. 1852, *CL* 27:98-99; TC to JSM, 28th June 1858, *CL* 33:259-260. On Carlyle's reaction to Mill's death, see TC to John A. Carlyle, 10th May 1873, in *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Alexander Carlyle (London and New York: John Lane / The Bodley Head, 1904), II:298, and *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I:495-500.

88 Carlyle complaining that Mill approached 'everything by the way of logical analysis', while Mill accepted that Carlyle 'was a poet' and a 'man of intuition', 'which I was not' (Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle*, 166-170, Mill, *Autobiography*, 147-149). As Mill explained in the *Autobiography*, his early education in classical rhetoric taught him how to convey to an audience 'gradually and by insinuation, thoughts which if expressed in a more direct manner would have roused their opposition', as did his later experience at the East India Company (*Autobiography*, 18-19, 72). This, of course, stood in stark contrast to Carlyle's fiery and uncompromising Jeremiads. According to Mill, Carlyle, like Coleridge 'possessed much truth, which was veiled from minds otherwise capable of receiving it by the transcendental and mystical phraseology in which they were accustomed to shut it up and from which they neither cared, nor knew how, to disengage it' (*Autobiography*, 206). Finally, as Stefan Collini has pointed out, it was part of Mill's rhetorical strategy to exaggerate his own isolation, as well as the shortcomings of his contemporaries, in order to promote an image of himself as a prescient and 'progressive' thinker (Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], 68, 128-131).

89 Mill, *Autobiography*, 161-162.

and advocates. In his 'Essays on Political Economy' (1862-63), Ruskin stated that in Carlyle's books, 'all has been said that needs to be said, and far better than I shall ever say it again'.⁹⁰ Similarly, upon donating his copy of Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843) to a friend, Ruskin wrote: 'I have sent you a book which I read no more because it has become a part of myself'.⁹¹ Furthermore, this admiration was reciprocated, Carlyle appreciating 'the noble fire' of 'Ruskin's books', and stating that 'there is nothing like him in England'.⁹² Of course, Ruskin's 'discipleship' to Carlyle has already been well-studied by scholars.⁹³ However, as Gregory Claeys recently noted in passing, Ruskin inherited many of Carlyle's Saint-Simonian ideas, and this point will receive more detailed examination in the following chapters.⁹⁴ Moreover, Donald Winch has recently sought to narrow the gap between Ruskin and Mill, particularly regarding their attitudes toward political economy.⁹⁵ Following on from this analysis, the subsequent chapters will attempt to bring about a historiographical rapprochement of Carlyle, Mill, and Ruskin, again using Saint-Simonism as starting point.

However, the debates and controversies studied in this thesis will range beyond a small number of 'elite' figures such as Mill and Ruskin. Indeed, as one reviewer pointed out in 1843, Carlyle's 'influence' was 'felt in every joint and muscle of English society'.⁹⁶ Or, as Carlyle's disciple David Masson put it in 1850:

Throughout the whole atmosphere of this island his spirit has diffused itself, so that there is probably not an educated man under forty years of age, from Caithness to Cornwall, that can honestly say he has not been more or less affected by it.⁹⁷

In seeking to analyse some of the controversies that took place around and in response to Carlyle's

90 John Ruskin, 'Essays on Political Economy', 217. Ten years later, in 1872, Ruskin dedicated *Munera Pulveris* to 'the friend and guide who has urged me to all chief labour, Thomas Carlyle' ('Munera Pulveris' [1872], in *The Crown of Wild Olive – Munera Pulveris – Pre-Raphaelitism – Aratra Pentelici* [New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1894], 110).

91 Cited in Frederick William Roe, *The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin* [1921], new ed. (New York: Gordian Press, 1970), 144-145.

92 TC to John A. Carlyle, 24th Feb 1872, in *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, II:284.

93 The classic study is Frederick William Roe, *The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin* [1921], new ed. (New York: Gordian Press, 1970). See also the useful correctives of George Allen, 'Ruskin's Discipleship to Carlyle: A Reevaluation', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, ed. J. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 227-256.

94 Gregory Claeys, 'Non-Marxian socialism 1815-1914', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Stedman Jones and Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 542-543.

95 Donald Winch, *Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 87, 96.

96 William Thomson, review of *On Heroes*, in *Christian Remembrancer*, VI (Aug. 1843), 121.

97 David Masson, review of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, in *North British Review*, XIV (Nov. 1850), 4.

writings, the following chapters will draw heavily, if not immoderately, upon the periodical press. Fortunately, many of the articles and reviews that dealt with Carlyle have already been catalogued by bibliographers such as Isaac Dyer.⁹⁸ Moreover, there are by now two different anthologies, each containing a selection of such articles and reviews.⁹⁹ However, for all their usefulness, these bibliographies and anthologies have one central shortcoming, namely, that they do not go beyond what we might call the 'elite', 'respectable', 'mainstream' periodical press. In the subsequent chapters, an attempt will be made to broaden the scope of inquiry, taking into account an array of Chartist, Owenite, and other socialist responses to Carlyle, hitherto passed over by the existing secondary literature. (In doing so, I have found fairly useful what the Germans seem nowadays to be referring to as *Wissensgeschichte*. This stresses the 'social production and circulation of knowledge', as well as the way in which 'discourses' enter into and shape 'practices').¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the study of such hitherto unused and underused sources opens up a whole new context for Carlyle's works, and, it is hoped, will lead to a new appreciation of him as a central figure in the history of early British socialism. Ultimately, this is the red thread which runs through this thesis from beginning to end. Of course, it is fairly well-known that when, in 1906, the *Review of Reviews* asked Labour MPs to name the books and authors that had influenced them the most, Carlyle came fourth, ceding only to Ruskin, Dickens, and the Bible.¹⁰¹ However, in my opinion, this has never been adequately accounted for.¹⁰² In the following chapters, it will be argued that the resonance of Carlyle's ideas amongst socialists, and particularly his Saint-Simonian ideas, had in fact begun far earlier in the nineteenth century. Finally, in the 'Epilogue' to this thesis, an attempt will be made to open up a discussion regarding the contribution of Carlyle's writings to the subsequent Labour movement. To do so perhaps risks inviting the charge of teleology, but, as one reviewer put it in 1861:

Every book, idea, and movement, is to be tested by its tendency, its great development, its

98 Isaac Watson Dyer, *A Bibliography of Thomas Carlyle's Writings and Ana* [1928] (New York: Octagon Books, 1968), 281-532.

99 Jules Paul Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage* [1971] (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), and D. J. Trela and Rodger L. Tarr (eds.), *The Critical Response to Thomas Carlyle's Major Works* (Westport CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1997). For French responses to Carlyle, a good starting point is Alan Carey Taylor, *Carlyle et la pensée latine* (Paris: Boivin & Cie., 1937), which, though not an anthology, contains a good bibliography. Unfortunately, the above anthologies often abridge and excerpt, thus cutting out many interesting aspects of these sources. For this reason, throughout this thesis, the original sources will be consulted and cited.

100 See Andreas Reckwitz, 'Praktiken und Diskurse: Eine sozialtheoretische und methodologische Relation', in *Theoretische Empirie: Die Relevanz qualitativer Forschung*, ed. H. Kalthoff, S. Hirschauer, and G. Lindemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), 188-209 (199-200), and Philipp Sarasin, 'Was ist Wissensgeschichte?', in *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, 36:1 (2011), 159-172 (164-172).

101 W. T. Stead, 'The Labour Party and the Books that helped to make it', in *Review of Reviews*, 33 (June 1906), 568-582. And, of course, both Ruskin and Dickens were significantly influenced by Carlyle.

102 For a review of the existing literature, see the 'Epilogue' to this thesis.

ultimate consequences. Sometimes, indeed, this seems dishonest and unfair; and a writer may stand indignantly up from his shrouding pages, and say, 'Prove me; I never intended that. You have wrested my words, and have given to them a bias never contemplated by me.' But, in fact, we cannot save ourselves from tendencies.¹⁰³

Subsequent chapters will seek to chart, via Carlyle, the Saint-Simonian 'tendency' in the history of British socialism. In particular, it is hoped that this might contribute towards the recovery of those aspects of socialist thought, such as a stress on self-mastery, duty, and authority, that have long since lapsed into desuetude. However, before going on to look at Carlyle's appropriation and use of Saint-Simonian concepts, it is first necessary to recount his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians themselves, the subject to which we now turn.

CARLYLE AND THE SAINT-SIMONIAN 'MISSION' TO BRITAIN (c. 1830-1834)

In his *Portraits in Miniature*, Lytton Strachey opined that 'Carlyle was not an English gentleman, he was a Scotch peasant; and his insularity may be measured accordingly'.¹⁰⁴ However, as this section will show, this was in fact far from the truth. From the moment of their first contact in July 1830, Carlyle maintained an intense and continuous interest in the Saint-Simonians, their activities, their writings, and their ideas, for nigh on four whole years. In this section, an attempt will be made to reconstruct Carlyle's contacts with the Saint-Simonians, and to demonstrate just how positive his response to them was. In doing so, the section will draw heavily on Carlyle's *Collected Letters*, which contain a vast quantity of new information unknown to previous commentators.¹⁰⁵ In particular, it is now known exactly which Saint-Simonian publications Carlyle received, and these will be listed in the course of the section. Indeed, this latter point is particularly important regarding the subsequent chapters of this thesis, in which these specific publications will provide the basis for discussion of the Saint-Simonians' ideas. Finally, at the very outset of this section, it ought to be made clear that there will be no significant analysis of the thought of Carlyle or of the Saint-Simonians, this being reserved to subsequent chapters. For now, the aim is simply to reconstruct the contacts between the two, as a basis for further discussion.

Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, in 1795.¹⁰⁶ His father was a stonemason, and, as

¹⁰³'Thomas Carlyle and His Critics', in *The Eclectic Review*, 1 (1861), 25-57 (52).

¹⁰⁴Amongst the opening words of his essay on 'Carlyle' in *Portraits in Miniature and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931).

¹⁰⁵*The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-).

¹⁰⁶The best recent biographies are, in my opinion, Fred Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* (Ithaca NY: Cornell

noted above, his family were devout members of the local Burgher Secession church. Following an education at local schools and the Annan Academy, Carlyle entered the University of Edinburgh in 1809. Upon completing his studies, Carlyle enrolled as a part-time student at Divinity Hall, in what, as Ian Campbell puts it, 'would be regarded today as distance learning, but more distinguished by the distance than by the learning'.¹⁰⁷ Having abandoned plans to become a minister in the Church of Scotland, he returned to the Annan Academy in 1814 as a mathematics tutor, before moving to another school, in Kirkaldy, in 1816. Finding schoolmastering uncongenial, Carlyle resigned in November 1818, returning to Edinburgh, where he taught mathematics, and made some show of studying law. Moreover, he also tutored Charles Buller, the son of an aristocratic family recently returned from India, whom we will again encounter later in this section. During these years, Carlyle also made his first ventures into journalism, contributing a series of entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*. He also studied German, and slowly began to carve out a name for himself as a translator and interpreter of German literature. In 1824, he published a translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, followed by a *Life of Friedrich Schiller* (1825), selected translations of *German Romance* (1827), another translation of Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (1827), and an array of periodical articles on related subjects. However, as Carlyle later reminisced, his 'first entrances into glorious "Literature"' were abundantly stinted and pitiful.¹⁰⁸ In the first place, British reviewers frequently objected to the 'vulgarity' of the German authors whom Carlyle sought to popularise. For instance, Francis Jeffrey, reviewing Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* in the *Edinburgh Review*, wrote that 'the tissue of the story is sufficiently coarse, and the manners and sentiments infected with a strong tinge of vulgarity'.¹⁰⁹ For his part, Thomas De Quincey remarked that what went on 'in German novels' was roughly analogous to what went on 'in English brothels', and, adding insult to injury, ridiculed the '*Scotticisms*', 'provincialisms', 'vulgarisms', and 'barbarisms' with which Carlyle's translation was 'overrun'.¹¹⁰ In

University Press, 1983), and Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995).

107 Ian Campbell, 'Carlyle and Divinity Hall', in *Literature and Belief*, 25:1-2 (2005), 1-23 (6). As Campbell points out, Scottish Divinity Schools were not enjoying a high reputation at the time, and many of Carlyle's contemporaries shared his disenchantment and frustration (11-12). For further evidence of Carlyle's lack of enthusiasm for his theological studies, see the records of his slender borrowings from the Theological Library, in Ian Campbell, 'Carlyle's Borrowings from the Theological Library of Edinburgh University', in *Bibliothek*, 5 (1969), 165-168.

108 'Lord Jeffrey' [1867], in *Reminiscences*, ed. C. E. Norton, Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972), 317.

109 Jeffrey, in *Edinburgh Review* (Aug. 1824), p. 415, cited in Olga Marx, 'Carlyle's Translation of Wilhelm Meister', Ph.D dissertation, Johns Hopkins University (1925), 30.

110 [Thomas De Quincey], 'Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship', in *London Magazine* (Aug. 1824), 189-197, (Sep. 1824), 291-307, quotes on p. 297 and 192-194. De Quincey attributed Carlyle's errors to 'want of sufficient intercourse with society'. Modern scholars have catalogued Carlyle's errors as a translator in meticulous, if not pedantic, length. For a list of charges, see Marx, 'Carlyle's Translation of Wilhelm Meister', 13-27, and C. T. Carr, 'Carlyle's Translations from German', in *The Modern Language Review*, 42:2 (Apr. 1947), 223-232 (225-227).

terms only slightly less cutting, William Taylor, in his *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1828-30), dismissed the *Apprenticeship* as 'tedious', and its sequel, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, as a figment of Goethe's 'senile garrulity'.¹¹¹ Moreover, Carlyle's books simply did not sell. For instance, according to Carlyle himself, the *Life of Schiller* was 'never advertised', 'never reviewed', 'but left lying in its nameless simplicity in the Waterloo Place warehouses, to get out as it could'.¹¹² Indeed, as Ian Campbell points out, by 1828, 'the London publisher, Taylor, was offering Carlyle the 650 remaining copies of the *Life of Schiller* for one shilling and sixpence, a ridiculously low price, simply to rid his shelves of this useless stock'.¹¹³ Similarly, as Carlyle later recalled, 'nobody took the least notice' of *German Romance*, which brought only a 'poor scrubby payment'.¹¹⁴ In 1828, partly to save money, Carlyle and his wife removed to Craigenputtock, an isolated farmstead in Dumfriesshire owned by his wife's family.¹¹⁵ Moreover, as Carlyle's biographer, Fred Kaplan, points out, by the beginning of 1830, 'the general opinion was that the small market for books on things German had dried up'.¹¹⁶ Carlyle made abortive attempts at writing fiction, most notably an unfinished novel entitled *Wotton Reinfred* (1826-27). However, he found that he was singularly unsuited to such work.¹¹⁷ In sum, Carlyle's financial situation was precarious, work was increasingly hard to come by, and he was isolated. Perhaps searching for other lines of remuneration, he began to venture into social and political commentary, particularly in 'Signs of the Times', an essay that appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in June 1829. In any case, Carlyle clearly felt that he had exhausted the potential of translations and commentaries, writing in March 1830 that

I have now almost done with the Germans... after all, one needs an intellectual Scheme (or ground plan of the Universe) drawn with one's own instruments.¹¹⁸

Thus, it seems Carlyle was at a turning point, both professionally and intellectually. Struggling to make a living as an interpreter of German literature, he had begun to turn toward political commentary, and was searching for a new 'intellectual Scheme (or ground plan of the Universe)'. A

¹¹¹Taylor, *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1828-30), cited in Susanne Howe, *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), 70, 99-102.

¹¹²TC to William Tait, 18th Jan. 1828, *CL* 4:307.

¹¹³Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle*, 57-58.

¹¹⁴Marginal notes to a biographical sketch by Friedrich Althaus [1866], in *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1974), 48-53, 64.

¹¹⁵Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle*, 64.

¹¹⁶Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 152.

¹¹⁷For a detailed study of Carlyle's inadequacies as a writer of fiction, see Carlisle Moore, 'Thomas Carlyle and Fiction', in *Nineteenth-Century Studies*, ed. H. Davis, W. C. DeVane, and R. C. Bald (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1940), 131-177.

¹¹⁸Journal entry c. Mar. 1830, in *Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Norton (New York: The Grolier Club, 1898), 150-151.

few months later, Carlyle would receive his first communication from the Saint-Simonians.

Henri de Saint-Simon was born in Paris in 1760, to an aristocratic family. As Olivier Pétér-Grenouilleau has recently shown, Saint-Simon's autobiographical writings were riddled with exaggerations, hyperbole, and half-truths, and thus ought to be treated with some circumspection.¹¹⁹ However, his followers, the Saint-Simonians, actively encouraged and promoted the legend he had created around himself, and it is this legend that Carlyle would have known. For this reason, it is worth briefly recounting. Having joined the French army, the young Saint-Simon fought under General Washington during the American War of Independence. Failing in a scheme to connect the Atlantic and Pacific by means of a canal through Panama, he returned to France following the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789. Here, he quickly made a fortune speculating in sales of land confiscated from the church, only to find himself imprisoned during the Reign of Terror. Following the end of the Terror, he was released from prison, only for his fortune to be stolen by his business partner. Saint-Simon thus decided to dedicate himself to science, studying at the École polytechnique and the École de Médecine, and moving in the same salons as the Ideologues. Despite starting out as a broadly liberal publicist, from around 1817 onward he increasingly stressed the need to organise what he called the 'industrial system'. Having failed to make many converts, and being in dire financial straits, he unsuccessfully attempted suicide in 1823, shooting himself repeatedly in the head. In his final work, the *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), Saint-Simon called for the establishment of a 'New Christianity', which would spur elites to organise 'industry' for the 'physical and moral improvement of the poorest and most numerous class'. Following the death of Saint-Simon in 1825, a small group of disciples, including Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin, established *Le Producteur*, a journal intended to propagate the economic ideas of their master.¹²⁰ This having proved unsuccessful, they increasingly brought the idea of a 'New Christianity' to the fore, eventually organising themselves as a Saint-Simonian church, with Saint-Simon as messiah, and Enfantin as pope. Odd as these practices might seem, the Saint-Simonians began to win numerous converts, particularly following the July Revolution of 1830, which brought them to public attention, both in France and abroad.

Late in 1829, the Saint-Simonians had read a French translation of Carlyle's 'Signs of the Times' in the *Revue britannique*. They then published a two-part review of it, written by Paul-Mathieu

¹¹⁹Olivier Pétér-Grenouilleau, *Saint-Simon: L'utopie ou la raison en actes* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 2001). For those who happen to be interested, Pétér-Grenouilleau establishes the true facts of Saint-Simon biography.

¹²⁰In my opinion, far and away the best general work on Saint-Simonism is Antoine Picon, *Les saint-simoniens: Raison, imaginaire et utopie* (Paris: Belin, 2002). In English, see Robert B. Carlisle, *The Proffered Crown: Saint-Simonism and the Doctrine of Hope* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

Laurent, in their own journal, *L'Organisateur*.¹²¹ In July 1830, Gustave d'Eichthal, one of the Saint-Simonians, was charged with writing to Carlyle on behalf of the society. Scion of a family of Franco-German bankers, d'Eichthal had studied philosophy in Germany, and had already visited Britain in 1828.¹²² To Carlyle, he wrote:

The disciples of St. Simon read your article 'Signs of the Times', translated in the *Revue britannique*, with great interest. They admired your vigorous portrayal of our current society; they rejoiced at the sentiment of love and of faith that leads you to desire, to hope for, a better future. They did not reproach you for not having gone beyond these still vague desires, for they know that it is only those who have seen the new light that God has given to the world through Saint-Simon who are capable of seeing a clear image of the future; and now they come to you, and call you to partake of this light, because you seem, more than any other, ready to receive it.¹²³

In line with the policy of bombarding potential sympathisers with free Saint-Simonian literature, d'Eichthal also enclosed a number of newspapers and books.¹²⁴ As the editors of Carlyle's *Collected Letters* discovered, these are still amongst Carlyle's papers in the National Library of Scotland.¹²⁵ The works in question were: (1) numbers 32 and 36 of the *Organisateur*, containing the Saint-Simonians' review of 'Signs of the Times'; (2) Saint-Simon's *L'Industrie*, tome quatrième, premier cahier (1818); (3) Saint-Simon's *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825); (4) *Le Producteur, journal philosophique de l'industrie, des sciences et des beaux-arts*, tome cinquième, premier cahier (Oct. 1826); (5) Eugène Rodrigues' translation of Lessing, *L'Education du genre humain* (1830); and (6) Emile Barrault's *Aux Artistes. Du Passé et de l'avenir des beaux-arts* (1830).

In fact, Carlyle already knew of Saint-Simon, having read Charles Dunoyer's 'Historical Sketch of Industrialism' in the *Revue encyclopédique* some years previously.¹²⁶ On the 6th August 1830,

121'Caractère de notre époque', in *Revue britannique*, XXVII (Nov. 1829), 5-29; Paul-Mathieu Laurent, 'Caractère de notre époque', in *L'Organisateur*, 32 (21st Mar. 1830), 'Caractère de notre époque, 2ème article', in *L'Organisateur*, 36 (18th Apr. 1830).

122See generally Barrie M. Ratcliffe, 'Gustave d'Eichthal: An Intellectual Portrait', in *A French Sociologist Looks at Britain: Gustave d'Eichthal and British Society in 1828*, ed. Ratcliffe and Chaloner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 109-161, and Hervé Le Bret, 'Les frères d'Eichthal: Gustave, penseur saint-simonien, et Adolphe, homme d'action', thèse d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, Université de Paris-Sorbonne / Paris-IV, 2 vols (2007).

123Gustave d'Eichthal to TC, July 1830, in 'Carlyle et le saint-simonisme: lettres à Gustave d'Eichthal', ed. Eugène d'Eichthal, in *Revue historique*, LXXXII (1903), 292-293.

124On Saint-Simonian 'propaganda techniques', see Jean Vidalenc, 'Les techniques de la propagande saint-simonienne à la fin de 1831', in *Archives de sociologie des religions*, 5:10 (1960), 3-20.

125See the editors' notes to *CL* 5:134-139.

126Charles Dunoyer, 'Esquisse historique des doctrines auxquelles on a donné le nom industrialisme, c'est-à-dire, des

Carlyle wrote to his brother John reporting the arrival of a 'Parcel of Books' and a letter, 'from the strangest of all Societies, the *Société St-Simonienne*'.¹²⁷ Within a mere three days, Carlyle responded to d'Eichthal in highly positive terms. In particular, Carlyle claimed that in the publications of the Saint-Simonians, he found many of his own earlier ideas set forth in highly systematic form, a point which will feature heavily in subsequent chapters. Carlyle wrote:

In these Books of your Society, which for most part were new to me, I find little or nothing to dissent from: the spirit at least meets my entire sympathy—the opinions also are often such as I, in my own dialect, have been accustomed to cherish, and more or less clearly enunciate... These prospects and interests of society I find set forth in your Works, in logical sequence and coherence, with precision, clear illustration, and the emphasis of a noble zeal.

However, Carlyle then expressed some doubts as to the presentation of Saint-Simon as a divinely inspired prophet, 'on which most important of all points I yet await instruction'. However, nonetheless, Carlyle was very keen to know more about the Saint-Simonians. He continued:

Doubt not, therefore, [that] the Book wherein you are to unfold your Religious principles, will be specially welcome here: the whole history and actual constitution of your Society, its aspects internal and external, its numbers, its political and economical relations, its whole manner of being and acting, are questions of unusual interest for me.¹²⁸

Thus, Carlyle's initial response to the Saint-Simonians was extremely positive. The next day, he wrote to his mother, explaining that the Saint-Simonians 'seem to think me a very promising man', and that 'in my present solitude, I am very glad of these small encouragements'.¹²⁹ Indeed, as noted above, Carlyle had been struggling to earn a living as an interpreter of German literature, and was at the time living in isolation at Craigenputtock, both of which facts help to explain his responsiveness to the overtures of the Saint-Simonians. The same month, Carlyle wrote in his journal that 'these people have strange notions, not without a large spicing of truth', and also wrote to Goethe, asking for his opinion on Saint-Simonism.¹³⁰ As Gottlieb Schuchard demonstrated some time ago, Goethe

doctrines qui fondent la société sur l'Industrie', in *Revue encyclopédique*, 33 (Feb. 1827), 368-94. For Carlyle's comments on the article, see journal entry c. Mar. 1827, in *Two Notebooks*, 113. Here, Carlyle noted that Saint-Simon was 'reputed mad', claimed to be 'descended from Charlemagne', and was now 'dead'.

127TC to John A. Carlyle, 6th Aug. 1830, *CL* 5:129, 133.

128TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 9th Aug. 1830, *CL* 5:134-139.

129TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 10th Aug. 1830, *CL* 5:140.

130Journal entry c. Aug. 1830, in *Two Notebooks*, 158-60; TC to Goethe, 31st Aug. 1830, *CL* 5:156.

knew of the Saint-Simonians, having learnt of them through various French and German newspapers, and would soon go on to portray Saint-Simon, albeit satirically, in Part II of *Faust* (1832).¹³¹ (Interestingly, Carlyle would actually prefer the latter to Goethe's earlier works).¹³² Perhaps stung by the criticisms that the Saint-Simonians had made of his own lack of political engagement, Goethe swiftly responded to Carlyle, urging him 'to keep well away from the Saint-Simonian Society'.¹³³ However, as Kenneth Fielding pointed out, the 'interesting thing is that when the wise old man warned [Carlyle] off, he kept straight on'.¹³⁴ Indeed, despite this warning from Goethe, whom he vastly respected, Carlyle wrote to his brother John on the 12th November: 'Goethe says: *von der Société St-Simonienne bitte sich fern zu halten!* Nevertheless send me their Books by the very first chance'.¹³⁵ A month later, Carlyle again wrote to his brother, informing him that he had gone so far as to translate 'Saint-Simon's *Nouveau Christianisme*' into English, and asking the latter to help find a publisher in London, a request he repeated in the new year.¹³⁶ Clearly, Carlyle's interest in Saint-Simonism was at this point exceptionally strong.

In the New Year, a fresh round of correspondence opened between Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians. At the end of January 1831, Carlyle again received 'a large mass' of Saint-Simonian publications, including 'Expositions of their Doctrine; Proclamations sent forth during the famous Three Days; many Numbers of their weekly Journal'.¹³⁷ Furthermore, it seems that the market for

¹³¹See G. C. L. Schuchard, 'Julirevolution, St. Simonismus und die Faustpartein von 1831', in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 60 (1935), 240-274, 362-384. Goethe's sources were French newspapers such as *Le Temps* and the *Revue de Paris*, as well as a series of articles by Friedrich Wilhelm Carové in the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (Schuchard, 269). For Goethe's mocking comments on Saint-Simonism during the composition of Part II of *Faust*, see Schuchard, 363-367, and for the satire of Saint-Simon itself (in which Faust attempts to reclaim the land from the sea), *ibid*, 262-266, 273-274, 383. On Carové, see Hans Christoph Schmidt am Busch, 'Friedrich Wilhelm Carové, Eduard Gans und die Rezeption des Saint-Simonismus im Horizont der Hegelschen Sozialphilosophie', in *Hegelianismus und Saint-Simonismus*, ed. H.-C. Schmidt am Busch, L. Siep, H.-U. Thamer and N. Waszek (Paderborn: Mentis, 2007), 105-130.

¹³²Upon reading John Stuart Blackie's translation of *Faust* in 1834, he responded: 'I find considerably more meaning in the *Second Part*.' (TC to John Stuart Blackie, cited in Anna M. Stodart, *John Stuart Blackie: A Biography* [Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1895], I:144-149 [148], also in *CL* 7: 135-137). Similarly, Carlyle later told Emerson: "Yes, *Kunst* is a great delusion, and Goethe and Schiller wasted a great deal of good time on it". According to Emerson, Carlyle 'thinks he discovers that old Goethe found this out, and, in his later writings, changed his tone' (Emerson, *English Traits* [1856] [Boston MA and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903], 274). David DeLaura has also noted this shift in Carlyle's attitude toward Goethe, but does not mention the possible Saint-Simonian influence (DeLaura, 'Carlyle and the "Insane" Fine Arts', in *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, ed. D. R. Sorensen and R. L. Tarr [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004], 27-39 [29]).

¹³³Goethe to TC, 17th Oct. 1830, in *Goethe's und Carlyle's Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1887), 118. As Schuchard pointed out, the Saint-Simonians had criticised Goethe for his lack of political engagement ('Julirevolution, St. Simonismus und die Faustpartein von 1831', 368-369). Three days after having written to Carlyle, that is, on the 20th Oct., Goethe protested in conversation: 'Je n'ai jamais considéré l'intérêt de la masse en écrivant, mais j'ai cherché de [sic] dire des choses vraies... je laisse à d'autres le soin de faire des loix et de charter la meilleure route pour améliorer l'état de la société... ce n'est plus mon affaire' (cited in Schuchard, 249).

¹³⁴Fielding, 'Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians', 40-41.

¹³⁵TC to John A. Carlyle, 12th Nov. 1830, *CL* 5:191.

¹³⁶TC to John A. Carlyle, 19th Dec. 1830, *CL* 5:203; TC to John A. Carlyle, 21st Jan. 1831, *CL* 5:216-217.

¹³⁷TC to Goethe, 22nd Jan. 1831, *CL* 5:222.

articles on German literature was still overstocked. As Carlyle noted in an article published in March, 'there [was] no one of our younger, more vigorous Periodicals, but has its German craftsman'.¹³⁸ Indeed, this could only have strengthened Carlyle's resolve to move away from literature towards political subjects, and, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, he almost immediately began to make use of a number of Saint-Simonian ideas. In February, Carlyle even contemplated writing 'a Paper on the Saint-Simonians'.¹³⁹

In May 1831, Carlyle again wrote to Gustave d'Eichthal, having since discovered that his brother John knew the latter's uncle, and that his own erstwhile student, Charles Buller, had recently attended Saint-Simonian gatherings in Paris.¹⁴⁰ As Carlyle explained:

my former Pupil, Charles Buller, is your personal acquaintance; nay, still stranger... my Brother, whom you will see in London, was for a whole year the guest of your late worthy Uncle, the Baron von Eichthal, at Munich.¹⁴¹

In his letter, Carlyle also thanked d'Eichthal for 'two successive packets of Saint-Simonian Publications, containing *Organisateurs*, the *First Year* of your *Exposition*, with other miscellaneous sheets', and assured him that a 'new packet, of somewhat similar contents, is now announced as on its way from London'. While it is not clear exactly which publications arrived in which packet, the editors of the *Collected Letters* have established that Carlyle now possessed, or would very soon possess: (1) *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. Première Année. Seconde Édition* (1830); (2) *Exposition de la Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Deuxième Année* (1830) but only up to page sixteen; and (3) *Religion Saint-Simonienne. Réunion Générale de la Famille. Note sur le Mariage et la Divorce. Par le Père Rodrigues* (1831). Again, Carlyle's response to these publications was extremely positive, and, as in his earlier letter, he again stressed that in the writings of the Saint-Simonians, he found many of his own earlier ideas set forth in highly systematic form. He told d'Eichthal:

I may say, with great sincerity, that my respect for your Brethren and Chiefs, personally

138'Historic Survey of German Literature' [Mar. 1831], in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, People's Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), III:219-220. As Ed Block Jr. has pointed out, Carlyle's originality and importance as an interpreter of German literature has often been exaggerated. In fact, insofar as both content and form were concerned, his contributions to the periodical press were largely on par with those of his competitors. See Ed Block Jr., 'Carlyle, Lockhart, & the Germanic Connection: The Periodical Context of Carlyle's Early Criticism', in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 16:1 (1983), 20-27.

139Journal entry for 7th Feb 1831, in *Two Notebooks*, 184-185.

140See TC to John A. Carlyle, 26th Feb. 1831, *CL* 5:234-236, 238.

141TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 17th May 1831, *CL* 5:276-280. John had gone to study medicine in Bavaria.

considered, has not diminished but increased, on closer survey... your speculative opinions, political, moral, philosophical, for most part carry their own evidence, and find hearty assent with me: often, indeed, I discern therein only a more decisive systematic exposition of what I had already gathered elsewhere... In short, were the Saint-Simonian Doctrine stated as a mere Scientific Doctrine, or held out as the *Prophecy of an Ultimate Perfection* towards which Society must more and more approximate,—I could with few reservations subscribe to it, and heartily agree with you that it was the duty of all men, by whatever best means they had, to forward such a consummation.

However, despite his great enthusiasm for the 'political, moral, philosophical' opinions of the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle again questioned their decision to present themselves as 'a *Church*, and founders of a new *Religion*'. As we shall see, this would become a recurrent theme in Carlyle's response to the Saint-Simonians, as he sought to extract the rational kernel of their thought from its mystical shell. Nonetheless, Carlyle ended his letter by inviting to d'Eichthal to visit him at Craigenputtock.¹⁴² Indeed, the subsequent months did little to diminish Carlyle's enthusiasm for Saint-Simonism. At the beginning of June 1831, in a letter to his brother, Carlyle wrote that he was 'very anxious' to see more Saint-Simonian 'Publications', and that regular copies of the *Globe*, the Saint-Simonians' daily newspaper, 'would be a great delight here'.¹⁴³ The following month, he wrote to John Bowring that 'Our wondrous Saint-Simonian Friends are making great way; converts in every direction', and explained that 'I should not be much surprised if the New Religion gained very universal acceptance among the Young'.¹⁴⁴

Shortly thereafter, Carlyle made an excursion to London, hoping to find a publisher for what would later become *Sartor Resartus*. Significantly, Saint-Simonism, when combined with first-hand experience of London politics, seems to have further encouraged Carlyle in his move away from literature towards social criticism. As David DeLaura has rightly pointed out, during the 1820s, it had become something of a literary common-place that poetry and the fine arts were in irreversible decline, and would never flourish in an age of 'civilisation', 'enlightenment', and 'science'. Indeed, in Britain, such theories had already been expressed by commentators such as Hazlitt, Peacock, and Macaulay.¹⁴⁵ However, the Saint-Simonians also put forward a highly similar analysis. In two of the publications that Carlyle by then possessed, the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon* and Barrault's *Aux*

142TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 17th May 1831, *CL* 5:276-280.

143TC to John A. Carlyle, 6th June 1831, *CL* 5:283.

144TC to John Bowring, 11th July 1831, *CL* 5:300-301.

145DeLaura, 'The Future of Poetry: A Context for Carlyle and Arnold', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, ed. J. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 148-180 (152-161).

Artistes, it was argued that the fine arts could not flourish in an era of social and political conflict, and would only revive with the coming of a new era of order and peace.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, Carlyle was now in London, where he witnessed the ongoing agitation for the Reform Bill first-hand. Writing to Goethe, he explained that 'the whole world' was 'dancing' a 'Dance of Political Reform, and has no ear left for Literature'.¹⁴⁷ In addition to such contemporary British writers and the Saint-Simonians, another influence who would have served to reinforce this conviction was, oddly enough, Tacitus. As Carlyle later reminisced, Tacitus had been one of the classical authors that 'became really interesting to me', and, in 'Voltaire' (Apr. 1829), he had described Tacitus as 'the wisest, most penetrating man of his generation'.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, Carlyle had recently re-read Tacitus's *Germania*, informing Goethe of the fact in a letter dated 23rd May 1830.¹⁴⁹ In his *Dialogue on Oratory*, Tacitus had compared the lot of the poet unfavourably to that of the orator. According to one personage, Aper, the poet, 'when he has concocted after long lucubration a single volume in a whole year, working every day and most nights as well... finds himself obliged to run round into the bargain and beg people to be kind enough to form an audience'.¹⁵⁰ Carlyle, the manuscript of *Sartor Resartus* in his back pocket, would no doubt have identified with this. However, later in the *Dialogue*, a poet, Maternus, goes on the counter-attack against oratory, declaring:

The art which is the subject of our discourse [oratory] is not a quiet and peaceable art... no, really great and famous oratory is a foster-child of licence... at Rome, so long as the constitution was unsettled, so long as the country kept wearing itself out with factions and dissensions and disagreements, so long as there was no peace in the forum... the growth of eloquence was doubtless sturdier.¹⁵¹

Carlyle, confronted with the spectacle of the ongoing struggle for the Reform Bill, wrote in his

146 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année. 1829. Seconde Édition* (Paris: Au Bureau de l'Organisateur / A. Mesnier, 1830), 93, 98; Emile Barrault, *Aux Artistes. Du Passé et de l'Avenir des Beaux-Arts. (Doctrine de Saint-Simon)* (Paris: Alexandre Mesnier, 1830), 71-74.

147 TC to Goethe, 13th Aug. 1831, *CL* 5:327. Carlyle continued to repeat this throughout his life, for instance in *The Life of John Sterling* [1851], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 202. See Peter Allen Dale, *The Victorian Critic and the Idea of History: Carlyle, Arnold, Pater* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), ch. 2.

148 Marginal notes to a biographical sketch by Friedrich Althaus [1866], in *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1974), 32-33. For references to Tacitus, principally the *Annals* and the *Histories*, see TC to Robert Mitchell, 16th Feb. 1818, *CL* 1:118-122, TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 18th Nov. 1822, *CL* 2:204-210, TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 16th Dec. 1822, *CL* 2:226-232, journal entry for 7th Dec. 1826, in *Two Notebooks*, 86, and entry for [Mar. 1827 ?], in *ibid.*, 122. For the citation from 'Voltaire', see 'Voltaire' [Apr. 1829], in *CME*, II:122.

149 TC to Goethe, 23rd May 1830, *CL* 5:103-107.

150 Tacitus, 'A Dialogue on Oratory', trans. W. Peterson, in *Agricola, Germania, Dialogus*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1970), 251-257.

151 *Ibid.*, 343-345.

notebook on 10th Oct. 1831: 'London is fit for no higher *Art* than that of *Oratory*; they understand nothing of *Art*'.¹⁵² Moreover, this encouraged him to question whether he was right to 'stand aloof from Politics', further asking himself: 'Is it to be done by *Art*; or are men's minds as yet shut to *Art*, and open at best to oratory [?]'.¹⁵³ Indeed, in the *Dialogue*, Aper had stated that his aim was to draw the poet, Maternus, 'away from the lecture-hall and the stage [into] the forum'.¹⁵⁴ In sum, Carlyle was more and more losing faith in 'Art', and finding himself increasingly drawn toward the 'forum'.

In any case, as Frederick William Roe once put it, upon arriving in London, Carlyle's 'mind was very evidently running on the social teachings of [the Saint-Simonians]'.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, Carlyle seems to have used his time in London as an opportunity to find out more about Saint-Simonism. At a dinner organised by the publisher James Fraser, Carlyle met a "young French Man of Property," with whom he 'conversed some minutes on the Saint-Simonians', only to conclude that the latter 'knew next to nothing credible'.¹⁵⁶ He also read Robert Southey's attack on the Saint-Simonians in the *Quarterly Review*, in which the latter were denounced as 'blasphemous and dangerous'.¹⁵⁷ Upon reading the article, Carlyle pronounced it 'altogether miserable'.¹⁵⁸ Thus, Carlyle was still actively inquiring after the Saint-Simonians at every available opportunity, and defending them against their critics in his correspondence.

Carlyle soon found out more about Saint-Simonism from his brother John, who, in October 1831, passed through Paris on his way to Italy. Carlyle wrote a letter of introduction to Gustave d'Eichthal, explaining that he had instructed his brother 'to familiarise himself as far as possible with the actual aspects of the Doctrine of St. Simon'.¹⁵⁹ On 14th October, John reported his attendance at a Saint-Simonian meeting. Commenting on the liturgy, vestments, and other pseudo-religious practices of the the sect, he wrote:

It was impossible to make oneself heard without screaming quite violently. The men were dressed in blue coats lighter in colour according to their higher rank, & most of the women in white or printed cotton... A stranger admitted amongst them without knowing any thing of

¹⁵²*Two Notebooks*, 212.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 203-204.

¹⁵⁴Tacitus, 'A Dialogue on Oratory', 257.

¹⁵⁵Roe, *The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin*, 44.

¹⁵⁶TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 24th Aug. 1831, *CL* 5:363.

¹⁵⁷[Robert Southey], 'Doctrine de Saint-Simon: New Distribution of Property', in the *Quarterly Review*, XLV (July 1831), 407, 447. Southey later addressed a conciliatory note to the Saint-Simonians (4th Feb. 1832, MS 14385/12, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris).

¹⁵⁸TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 14th Sep. 1831, *CL* 5:427, 433.

¹⁵⁹TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 3rd Oct. 1831, *CL* 6:3.

their sentiments might have been long in guessing their purpose.¹⁶⁰

In another letter, most likely written shortly thereafter, John referred not only to d'Eichthal, but also to the Saint-Simonian leaders Bazard, Enfantin, and Barrault. He wrote:

I went to the predication according to appointment with Gustave D'Eichthal... Suddenly the side door opened & those on the stage rose to honour the entrance of the *Pères* Bazard & Enfantin, & the preacher Barault [sic]. The *pères* took their seats on the side chairs & Barault in the middle upon which a pause ensued. The preacher then rose & after repeating what seemed a sort of formula invoking or complimenting the 'fathers' he went on in an outrageously theatrical style.¹⁶¹

As noted above, despite his enthusiasm for the Saint-Simonians' social and political ideas, Carlyle had already expressed some unease at their 'religious' pretensions, and John's reports served to confirm his suspicions. Moreover, he was now convinced that, whatever the merit of their ideas, the Saint-Simonians would not survive as an organised 'church'. He replied to John:

I was much instructed by your sketches of Saint Simonism; concerning which I do not differ far from you in opinion or prediction. It is an upholstery aggregation, not a Promethean creation; therefore cannot live long.¹⁶²

Having further familiarised himself with Saint-Simonism via John, Carlyle soon had an opportunity to meet some Saint-Simonians in person. Two months later, in January 1832, he was visited by Gustave d'Eichthal, who, along with Charles Duveyrier, had been sent to London as a Saint-Simonian 'missionary'.¹⁶³ In addition to Saint-Simonism, it is likely they had much to discuss, d'Eichthal sharing Carlyle's interest in German literature and philosophy, and also having studied in Germany.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, d'Eichthal had, like many sons of French industrialists, travelled to Britain as part of his education, visiting, amongst other places, Carlyle's native Scotland.¹⁶⁵ Carlyle was

160John A. Carlyle to TC, 14th Oct. 1831, *CL* 6:27.

161The date of this letter is unclear. See *CL* 6:46-48.

162TC to John A. Carlyle, 13th Nov. 1831, *CL* 6:46-48.

163For the story of the mission, see Richard Pankhurst, *The Saint-Simonians, Mill and Carlyle* (London: Lalibela Books, 1957).

164D'Eichthal was in Germany from 1824 to 1825. See Le Bret, 'Les frères d'Eichthal', I:182-185, Ratcliffe, 'Gustave D'Eichthal: An Intellectual Portrait', 130-143.

165D'Eichthal visited in Britain during 1828. See the English translation of his 'Journal and Notes' [1828], in *A French Sociologist Looks at Britain*, 74-89. See also Peter Stearns, 'British Industry through the Eyes of French Industrialists (1820-1848)', in *Journal of Modern History*, 37:1 (1965), 51.

evidently far more impressed by d'Eichthal than many of the other acquaintances he had made in London, describing him in his notebook as a 'little, tight, cleanly loveable Geschöpfen, a pure martyr and apostle, as it seems to me; almost the only one (not 'belonging to the Past') whom I have met with in my pilgrimage'.¹⁶⁶ The following day, Carlyle wrote to his mother, expressing his pleasure at having met 'an actual Saint-Simonian Frenchman, arrived as a Missionary here!'.¹⁶⁷ The next day, Carlyle's wife Jane informed a correspondent that 'We hope to see a great deal of these [men] before we leave London', and explained that both d'Eichthal and Duveyrier 'seem to entertain a h[igh] respect for Carlyle'.¹⁶⁸

However, despite his admiration for d'Eichthal, Carlyle also seems to have found him somewhat dogmatic, noting that his 'ideas' were 'narrow, and sore distorted'.¹⁶⁹ By the beginning of February, Carlyle had begun to complain of the 'rather wearisome jargon' of the 'two Saint-Simonian Missionaries'.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, the language of the Saint-Simonians was undeniably both dogmatic and jargon-laden. Moreover, Carlyle also noted that the Saint-Simonian society in Paris had recently 'split in two' between the supporters of Bazard and Enfantin, 'the whole matter hastening towards its consummation'.¹⁷¹ Aware of the scandal and censure that surrounded the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle sent his translation of the *Nouveau Christianisme* to d'Eichthal, authorising him 'to do what you wish with it, upon the single condition that *my name be not mentioned*'.¹⁷² In sum, despite his admiration for the social and political ideas of the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle objected to their dogmatism, their jargon, and their pseudo-religious, sectarian practices. Moreover, he had also become reluctant to associate himself with them publicly.

In one of the above letters, Carlyle had also noted that d'Eichthal and Duveyrier had met with 'small countenance' in London, being 'the greatest Babblers I have heard'.¹⁷³ At this point, it is worth briefly surveying the general response to Saint-Simonism in the British press, in order to place that of Carlyle in wider perspective. Not all commentators were hostile, the *Morning Chronicle* noting

166Journal entry for 21st Jan 1832, in *Two Notebooks*, 248.

167TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 22nd Jan. 1832, *CL* 6:94-95. Moreover, in the same letter, Carlyle made clear that his sympathies did not extend from Saint-Simonism to other social reformers, adding that he had that evening 'another engagement: to go and hear the famous Mr Owen preach in his "Institution" for the perfection of Society, or for something else equally noble, which I forget'. Carlyle had already visited Owen's New Lanark around 1817, and 'thought it (and him, whom we did not see, and knew only by his pamphlets and it) a thing of wind, not worth considering farther'. See 'Edward Irving' [1866-1867], in *Reminiscences*, 201-202.

168TC to Jean Carlyle, 23rd Jan. 1832, *CL* 6:100-101.

169Journal entry for 21st Jan 1832, in *Two Notebooks*, 248.

170TC to Macvey Napier, 6th Feb. 1832, *CL* 6:117.

171TC to John A. Carlyle, 16th Feb. 1832, *CL* 6:122-23, 127.

172TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 15th Feb. 1832, *CL* 6:118-119. Unfortunately, the translation was lost, and has never been rediscovered.

173TC to John A. Carlyle, 16th Feb. 1832, *CL* 6:122-23, 127.

that the Saint-Simonians were, for the most part, 'respectable' and 'well-educated', and explaining that Enfantin 'speaks well, writes well, converses well, is an honourable man, and a virtuous citizen'.¹⁷⁴ For its part, the radical *Poor Man's Guardian* argued that the 'opinions of the sect are new, attractive, often enthusiastic, always benevolent'.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, a writer in *Fraser's Magazine* praised the Saint-Simonians' views on labour and meritocracy, while adding that their attempts to set out a blueprint for the future would no doubt expose them to 'ridicule'.¹⁷⁶ However, as the article by Southey referred to above suggests, the Saint-Simonians' claims to have founded a new religion, and their imitation of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, provoked much hostility in Britain. Taking a more tolerant line, the *Monthly Repository* claimed that Saint-Simonism represented 'a vast improvement on the mummeries of Catholicism', hoping that it would eventually lead its adherents to an orthodox (i.e. Protestant) Christianity.¹⁷⁷ However, Edward Sterling, the editor of the *Times*, informed Gustave d'Eichthal that Saint-Simonism held little interest for him, being 'an humble but sincere believer in the creed of the Protestant Church of England', while William Burns explained that 'you will not be listened to – if you set forth St. Simonianism as a *new religion*'.¹⁷⁸ In April 1832, the *Times* derided the Saint-Simonians' 'New Christianity', adding that Britain already had 'too many quacks and mountebanks at home, to allow any chance for foreign competition'.¹⁷⁹ To some extent, Carlyle shared these judgements, having repeatedly criticised the Saint-Simonians' religious pretensions, and having explained in conversation to Gustave d'Eichthal that the Saint-Simonians were 'more religious than their founder', Saint-Simon.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, matters were not helped by Enfantin's ideas on sexuality and divorce, which British commentators often misrepresented as a belief in 'community of women'.¹⁸¹ Indeed, a certain Edward Hancock, in pamphlet entitled *Robert Owen's Community System, etc., and the Horrid Doings of the St. Simonians* (1832), went so far as to accuse the 'missionaries' of 'instructing' British 'females in the art of prostitution', and abducting

174'O. P. Q.', 'To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle, Paris, Jan. 24, 1832', in *Morning Chronicle* (27th Jan. 1832).

175'Doctrines of the St. Simonians', in *Poor Man's Guardian* (11th Feb. 1832).

176'Fair-Play', 'Letter on the Doctrine of St. Simon', in *Fraser's Magazine*, V (July 1832), 667.

177'The French Sect of Saint Simonites and the "New Christianity" of its Founder', in *Monthly Repository and Review of Theology and General Literature*, V (Feb. 1831), 88; Review of *De la Religion Saint-Simonienne. Aux Elèves de l'Ecole Polytechnique*, in *Monthly Repository and Review of Theology and General Literature*, V (Apr. 1831), 280.

178Edward Sterling to Gustave d'Eichthal, 5th Mar. 1832, MS 14385/22, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris; William Burns to the Saint-Simonians, 5th Feb. 1832, MS 14385/13.

179'Saint Simonians', in *The Times* (4th Apr. 1832).

180John Carlyle later wrote from Rome: 'Gustave d'Eichthal is come to Rome... he has found the truth of what you told him in London about the St Simonians being more religious than their founder'. See John A. Carlyle to TC, 27th / 28th Apr. 1833, CL 6:347. That the Saint-Simonians transformed the ideas of Saint-Simon, and increasingly brought the idea of a 'New Christianity' to the fore, is borne out by the recent secondary literature. See Christophe Prochasson, *Saint-Simon ou l'anti-Marx: Figures du saint-simonisme français XIXe – XXe siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 2005), 73-74, 97-98, 154, and Carlisle, *The Proffered Crown*, 48-72, 88-91.

181See for instance 'The Rights of Industry and the Banking System', in *Quarterly Review*, XLVII (July 1832), 408. It is likely that the ideas in question were inspired by Fourier rather than Saint-Simon. See Picon, *Les saint-simoniens*, 131-143.

girls and women in London's East End.¹⁸² In sum, like Carlyle, many other British commentators, while willing to recognise the value of certain insights of the Saint-Simonians, and their good intentions, strongly objected to their sectarianism and pseudo-religious practices. Given the controversy that the Saint-Simonians were provoking, it is hardly surprising that Carlyle was reluctant to associate himself with them publicly.

By June 1832, the Saint-Simonians had drawn further ridicule upon themselves by attempting to establish a commune at Ménilmontant, then on the outskirts of Paris.¹⁸³ As Carlyle remarked in a letter to John Stuart Mill: 'The poor Saint-Simonians! Figure Duveyrier, with waiter's apron, emptying slop-pails,—for the salvation of a world'. Continuing, he predicted that 'the Saint-Simonian sect', now under the sole leadership of Enfantin, would soon fall into dissolution.¹⁸⁴ However, despite his disapproval of the current trajectory of the Saint-Simonian society, Carlyle was continuing to assimilate and make use of their social and political ideas, and to reconsider his own vocation in light of them. In particular, Carlyle by now seems to have firmly resolved to leave behind purely literary subjects, and to move into social and political criticism. Echoing Saint-Simonian theories of 'industrialism', he wrote, in an article published in August:

for the Poet what remains but to leave Conservative and Destructive pulling one another's locks and ears off... and, for his own part, strive day and night to forward the small suffering remnant of *Productives*... Go thou and do likewise ! Art thou called to politics, work therein, as this man would have done, like a real and not an imaginary workman.¹⁸⁵

By October, the Saint-Simonian society had been forcibly suppressed by the French authorities. However, nonetheless, Carlyle at this time wrote to Mill, informing him that he was again thinking about writing an article on the Saint-Simonians.¹⁸⁶ Thus, despite the collapse of the Saint-Simonian society, Carlyle still considered the Saint-Simonians worthy of attention.

In December 1832, Mill wrote to Carlyle informing him that both d'Eichthal and Duveyrier had 'given up St. Simonism'. Moreover, he also recommended a series of articles in the *Revue encyclopédique* by former Saint-Simonians, who, according to Mill, had 'retained almost all the

¹⁸²Edward Hancock, *Robert Owen's Community System, etc., and the Horrid Doings of the St. Simonians* (London, 1832), 43.

¹⁸³See Carlisle, *The Proffered Crown*, 192-193.

¹⁸⁴TC to JSM, 16th June 1832, *CL* 6:174-175.

¹⁸⁵'Goethe's Works' [Aug. 1832], in *CME*, IV:182.

¹⁸⁶TC to JSM, 16th Oct. 1832, *CL* 6:238-241.

good which ever was in St. Simonism', having come to understand that 'St. Simon, though a man far beyond his generation, was but a false Christ'.¹⁸⁷ Thus, Mill seems to have believed that it was possible to extricate the Saint-Simonians' social and political ideas from their pseudo-religious reveries. In his response, Carlyle wrote that he was glad to hear that d'Eichthal was no longer following Enfantin, and asked that Mill send him some 'Saint-Simonian Books'.¹⁸⁸ In April 1833, Mill obliged, sending an account of the trial of the Saint-Simonians, and suggested that the religious extravagances of the Saint-Simonians might be ascribed to the 'barrenness of the French mind', the French tending to 'run wild with an interesting truth when they have had it impressed upon them'.¹⁸⁹ Again, the implication was that there was an 'interesting truth' worthy of retention (perhaps by someone more level-headed than 'the French'). Having read the account of the trial, Carlyle endorsed Mill's assessment, blaming 'the French character' for Enfantin's presentation of himself as 'a God-Man', and also for 'all this of the *femme libre*'.¹⁹⁰ As this suggests, for both Carlyle and Mill, it was possible to separate the truths of Saint-Simonism from the quasi-religious guise given to them by Enfantin.

In September 1833, now more than three years after his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle charged Mill with conveying his 'friendliest wishes' to Gustave d'Eichthal, and, at the beginning of October, again mooted the possibility of 'an *Essay on the Saint-Simonians*'.¹⁹¹ However, the following month Carlyle wrote to his brother, noting that the Saint-Simonians had 'very unexpectedly come to light again, and set to giving missionary lectures of a most questionable sort in London'.¹⁹² This referred to the endeavours of Gregorio Fontana and Gioacchino di Prati, two Italians who had taken it upon themselves to make another attempt at converting the British to the Saint-Simonian 'religion'.¹⁹³ This met with little success, the *Times* branding the two men 'idiots', 'foul drivellers' and even 'animals', and also accusing Prati, in his 'unhallowed and obscene ravings', of having advocated 'community of women, and community of goods'.¹⁹⁴ Due to this renewed furore

187JSM to TC, 27th Dec. 1832, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part I', ed. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963).

188TC to JSM, 22nd Feb. 1833, *CL* 6:329, 332.

189JSM to TC, 11th / 12th Apr. 1833, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII. An account of the trial had been given in *The Times* (31st Aug. and 1st Sep. 1832).

190TC to JSM, 13th June 1833, *CL* 6:400-403.

191TC to JSM, 10th Sep. 1833, *CL* 6:438-439; TC to John A. Carlyle, 1st Oct. 1833, *CL* 7:6. On Carlyle's continuing affection for d'Eichthal, see also TC to John A. Carlyle, 27th Aug. 1833, *CL* 6:425-426.

192TC to John A. Carlyle, 18th Nov. 1833, *CL* 7:41.

193On Prati, see Alexander Jordan, "Be not a copy if thou canst be an original": German philosophy, republican pedagogy, Benthamism and Saint-Simonism in the political thought of Gioacchino di Prati, in *History of European Ideas* (forthcoming).

194Editorial in *The Times* (8th Nov. 1833). The paper later moderated its tone (20th Nov. 1833). Even the more sympathetic *Poor Man's Guardian* complained of Prati and Fontana's 'mysticism' and advocacy of a 'new religion' and 'new priesthood', concluding that '*St. Simonianism will make no progress in England*' ('The Saint Simonians', in

around the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle thus concluded 'they are *not* to be written of, being once more in the fermenting state'.¹⁹⁵ Again, as he had already made clear in sending his translation of the *Nouveau Christianisme* to d'Eichthal, Carlyle did not wish to be drawn into these controversies by publicly associating his name with Saint-Simonism.

However, as Mill pointed out in a letter to Carlyle in November, contrary to Fontana and Prati, the vast majority of former Saint-Simonians had 'retained of St. Simonianism about as much as is good and true, dropping the rest', and had already 'become *juste milieu* men in politics, endeavouring to work out improvement with the *existing* machinery'.¹⁹⁶ In his response, Carlyle asked Mill to tell him 'a little about these London St. Simonians', noting that Fontana and Prati had 'published a sixpenny pamphlet'.¹⁹⁷ In his review of the latter, published in the *Examiner* early in 1834, Mill dismissed the two Italians out of hand, arguing that they could not be 'authorised representatives of the St. Simonian Society', the latter having long since dissolved, and its more able members having turned themselves to more practical endeavours.¹⁹⁸ However, Mill also made clear that he still considered Saint-Simonism to be 'the true ideal of a perfect society; the spirit of which will more and more pervade the *existing* social institutions, as human beings become wiser and better'.¹⁹⁹ Again, the salient point is that for both Mill and Carlyle the truth of Saint-Simonism lay not in attempts to found a new 'religion' or 'church', but in more practical experiments conducted over a longer period of time. Having bound the various Saint-Simonian publications he possessed into a single volume, Carlyle wrote on its cover at the beginning of May 1834:

The Saint-Simonian Sect, after attracting considerable notice for a space of two years, began to split in pieces, underwent a sentence of Law (apparently on false charges) in 1832, and soon dissolved and disappeared. The little Truth that lay among their crudities has not disappeared, or even properly appeared, but yet waits its time.²⁰⁰

In Carlyle's subsequent published writings, explicit references to Saint-Simonism were few and fleeting. However, all tended to make a distinction between the 'Truth' of Saint-Simonism itself, and

Poor Man's Guardian [30th Nov. 1833]).

195TC to John A. Carlyle, 18th Nov. 1833, *CL* 7:41.

196JSM to TC, 25th Nov. 1833, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII. See further Picon, *Les saint-simoniens*, 163-164.

197TC to JSM, 17th Dec. 1833, *CL* 7:53-54, 57.

198John Stuart Mill, review of Fontana and Prati's 'St. Simonism in London', in *The Examiner* (2nd Feb. 1834), 68-69;

Mill, response to an (unpublished) letter from Prati, in *The Examiner* (23rd Mar. 1834), 185-186.

199*Examiner* (2nd Feb. 1834), 68-69. See also Lanaro, *L'Utopia Praticabile*, 30-31.

200Written 6th May 1834. See the editors' notes to TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 9th Aug. 1830, *CL* 5:134-139.

mistaken attempts to found a Saint-Simonian religion or church. For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), Carlyle wrote, referring to his protagonist, Professor Diogenes Teufelsdröckh:

when the *Saint-Simonian Society* transmitted its Propositions hither, and the whole *Ganse* was one vast cackle of laughter, lamentation, and astonishment, our Sage sat mute; and at the end of the third evening, said merely: "Here also are men who have discovered, not without amazement, that Man is still Man; of which high, long-forgotten Truth you already see them make a false application".²⁰¹

Several years later, in an 1837 review of Buchez and Roux's 'Parliamentary History of the French Revolution', we read that the two authors 'once listened a little to Saint-Simon, but it was before Saint-Simonism called itself "a religion", and vanished into Bedlam'.²⁰² Six years thereafter, in *Past and Present* (1843) Carlyle wrote:

this new second progress, of proceeding 'to invent God,' is a very strange one! Jacobinism unfolded into Saint-Simonism bodes innumerable blessed things; but the thing itself might draw tears from a Stoic!... They fancy that their religion too shall be a kind of Morrison's Pill, which they have only to swallow once, and all will be well.²⁰³

Thus, the Saint-Simonians erred in believing that the foundation of a new 'religion' would solve the world's problems overnight. However, in other senses, according to Carlyle, Saint-Simonism boded 'innumerable blessed things'. Another explicit (albeit passing) reference to Saint-Simonism occurred eight years later in Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* (1851). Here, Carlyle described Sterling's visit to Paris in 1828, noting that Sterling witnessed 'with no undue enthusiasm the Saint-Simonian Portent just beginning to preach for itself'. Again, the implication was that Saint-Simonism merited 'enthusiasm', and was, moreover, a 'Portent', that is, a prophecy of something momentous to come. However, as in other references to Saint-Simonism, Carlyle then disavowed its pseudo-religious aspects, associating these with the various other 'impieties', 'levities', and 'frothy fantasticalities' under which France was then 'simmering'.²⁰⁴

References to Saint-Simonism and the former Saint-Simonians were similarly sparse in Carlyle's

201 *Sartor Resartus* [written 1830-1831, first published 1833-1834], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 224.

202 'Parliamentary History of the French Revolution' [1837], in *CME*, VI:7.

203 *Past and Present* [1843], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1912), 218-219.

204 *The Life of John Sterling* [1851], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 49.

private correspondence. However, there are two notable instances which are worth briefly mentioning. First, in 1839, Carlyle was approached with an offer to translate a *Life of Napoleon* by Paul-Mathieu Laurent. As noted above, Laurent was the Saint-Simonian who had reviewed Carlyle's essay 'Signs of the Times' in *L'Organisateur* nine years previously.²⁰⁵ Moreover, as Mill reported in 1837, Carlyle continued to remember Gustave d'Eichthal 'with pleasure', and, in 1841, was the recipient of the latter's *De l'Unité européenne* (1840), which had been forwarded to him by Mill.²⁰⁶ Former Saint-Simonians thus continued to take an interest in Carlyle, perhaps seeing him as something of a kindred spirit, and recognising the persistent resonance of their own ideas in his writings. Finally, in 1853, Carlyle made the acquaintance of the Russian socialist Alexander Herzen, an encounter which, as David Sorensen has recently suggested, may well have been facilitated by their shared admiration for Saint-Simonism.²⁰⁷

That there were few explicit references to Saint-Simonism in Carlyle's writings was perhaps unsurprising, given that the Saint-Simonians continued to be remembered in Britain as somewhat insalubrious and risible figures. For instance, an article on the 'History and Mystery of St. Simonianism', published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1843, claimed that the Saint-Simonians advocated community of goods and community of women, that their meetings consisted primarily in histrionic posturing, and that their leaders were involved in instances of embezzlement and sexual predation.²⁰⁸ Thus, as before, Carlyle would have been reluctant to associate himself publicly with Saint-Simonism. However, this being said, within Carlyle's circle of friends and acquaintances, a more nuanced and sympathetic understanding of Saint-Simonism seems to have continued to prevail. For instance, in 1846, Geraldine Jewsbury wrote to Carlyle's wife, Jane:

Oh, about 'St. Simonism'... in spite of all the theatrical nonsense and dressing up *à la Sainte Famille*, there is a great deal of beauty, truth, and excellence of purpose and sagacity too, in many of their views. I like their books, and the men, since *la Sainte Famille* was dispersed, have shown themselves men of practical ability.

Jewsbury then added that Giuseppe Mazzini, another member of Carlyle's circle, had recently lent

²⁰⁵See TC to an unidentified correspondent, 22nd Feb. 1839, *CL* 11:31.

²⁰⁶JSM to Gustave d'Eichthal, 24th Aug. 1837, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII; JSM to Gustave d'Eichthal, 9th Mar. 1841, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XIII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part II', ed. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964).

²⁰⁷David R. Sorensen, "'A Scotch Proudhon': Carlyle, Herzen, and the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1848", in *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, ed. D. R. Sorensen and R. L. Tarr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 40-59 (46-48).

²⁰⁸'Reminiscences of Men and Things, by one who has a good memory: The History and Mystery of St. Simonianism', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XXVII (May 1843), 609-614.

her the Saint-Simonians' 'Exposition Seconde Année'.²⁰⁹ Three years later, in 1849, Jewsbury informed Jane that George Henry Lewes (whom Carlyle referred to as the 'Prince of Journalists'),²¹⁰ had recently acquired an article dealing with Enfantin's 'last book', *Correspondance philosophique et religieuse*, and that this was due to be printed in the 'next number' of the *Westminster Review*.²¹¹ The article, entitled 'Religious Faith and Modern Scepticism' (Jan. 1850), recounted the author's recent visit to Paris, where, walking in the street, he and his companions had chanced upon 'no other than the Père Enfantin'. The author then explained that

After the affair of the *procès* [trial] which dispersed the St. Simonians under a storm of ridicule and ignominy, which they had provoked more by their theatrical, melodramatic mode of conducting themselves than by their doctrines... the men themselves, leaving behind their old name... re-entered society quietly, followed ostensible modes of gaining a living, excited no attention, and being delivered from the embarrassment of a false position, they met society on equal ground, and have most of them become remarkable men.

Moreover, continued the author, the 'disgrace into which their old name had fallen, did not hinder them from holding fast all that was good and vital in their doctrines', and, as 'private members of society, as critics, as journalists, as political economists, as historical teachers, they have permeated society with their doctrines in every direction'.²¹² This line of action was, as we have seen, exactly what Carlyle and Mill had recommended during the early 1830s.²¹³

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In conclusion, a close reading of the *Collected Letters* and other sources demonstrates that Carlyle reacted to Saint-Simonism in extremely positive terms, considering it to embody many of his own existing beliefs in highly systematic form. He sustained a high level of interest and sympathy for several years, before becoming disillusioned with the religious pretensions of the sect, and the leadership of Enfantin. However, he continued to treat the latter as aberrations from the fundamental truths of Saint-Simonism. In sum, all of the foregoing tends to confirm Hill Shine's

²⁰⁹Geraldine Jewsbury to JWC, 19th Mar. 1846, in *Selections From the Letters of Geraldine Endors Jewsbury to Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. A. Ireland (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1892), 206-207.

²¹⁰Gordon S. Haight, 'The Carlyles and the Leweses', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, ed. J. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 189.

²¹¹Jewsbury to JWC, 21st Sep. 1849, in *Selections From the Letters of Geraldine Endors Jewsbury to Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 296-297.

²¹²'Religious Faith and Modern Scepticism', in *Westminster Review*, LIII (Jan. 1850), 196-211 (199-200).

²¹³Indeed, Carlyle himself was briefly mentioned in the same article (*ibid.*, 205).

conclusion that, while Carlyle followed Goethe's advice to keep away from the Saint-Simonian society, due to the scandal that surrounded it, he did not keep away from its ideas.²¹⁴ Moreover, as a result of his study and assimilation of the latter, Carlyle began to move increasingly away from literature, and towards more overtly social and political commentary.²¹⁵

The following chapters will attempt to establish exactly which Saint-Simonian concepts Carlyle appropriated, and to analyse what he did with them in his later writings, in a specifically British context, and in response to specifically British problems. Chapter 1 deals with the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism', and its contribution to Carlyle's famous 'Gospel of Work'. In particular, it will be argued that the Saint-Simonian concept enabled Carlyle to re-situate various classical notions of virtue and self-mastery into the world of work. Chapter 2 deals with the Saint-Simonian concept of history as a series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. In particular, it will be suggested that Carlyle, following the Saint-Simonians, admired the 'organic' institutions of the middle ages, suggesting that these might serve as a model for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. Chapter 3 analyses the Saint-Simonian concept of the current era as a 'critical' era, that is, as an age of social conflict and dissolution. In particular, the chapter will argue that Carlyle, like the Saint-Simonians, considered 'laissez-faire' and 'democracy' as necessary, 'critical' phenomena, which served to destroy the obsolete institutions of the medieval past, thus clearing the way for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. However, like the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle also argued that this task had already been accomplished, and that the time had thus come to bring the current 'critical' era to an end. Accordingly, chapter 4 deals with the Saint-Simonian concepts of 'association' and the 'Organisation of Labour', and their resonance in the works of Carlyle. Chapter 5 explores Carlyle's imperial thought, arguing that he transposed Saint-Simonian notions of historical progress and the 'Organisation of Labour' onto a world scale. Finally, the Epilogue to this thesis will briefly examine the influence of Carlyle's writings on the early Labour movement, suggesting that, via Carlyle, it might make sense to speak of a 'Saint-Simonian moment' in the history of British socialism.

214Hill Shine, *Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians: The Concept of Historical Periodicity* (Baltimore MA: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), 59, 108, 143. And also Friedrich von Hayek's hypothesis: 'In its later years the school covered itself with ridicule by its pseudo-religious harlequinades and various escapades and follies; in consequence many men who had absorbed most of its social and philosophical teaching might well have been ashamed to admit their association with the cranks of M  nilmontant... But that did not mean that the ideas they had absorbed did not continue to operate through them, and a careful investigation would probably show how surprisingly widely that influence had extended' (Hayek, 'The Counter-Revolution of Science', in *Economica*, 8:31 [1941], 281-320 [281-282]).

215In any case, Carlyle certainly did not extend the same sympathy that he had shown to the Saint-Simonians to an aspiring Fourierist 'missionary', Hugh Doherty, whom he dismissed as 'a blethering Irish-French socialist, without sense' (TC to John A. Carlyle, 18th Dec. 1850, *CL* 25:310-312). On Doherty, see Richard K. P. Pankhurst, 'Fourierism in Britain', in *International Review of Social History*, 1:3 (1956), 401-408.

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'A valiant suffering for others':

From *industrie* to the 'Gospel of Work'



Ford Madox Brown, 'Work' (1852-65). Carlyle standing to the right with hat and walking stick.

INTRODUCTION

In *Culture and Society* and *Keywords*, Raymond Williams credited Carlyle with having introduced the term 'industrialism' into English, in order to 'indicate a new order of society based on an organizing mechanical production'.²¹⁶ For Williams, Carlyle was an opponent of this order, making 'culture' the 'ground of his attack on Industrialism'.²¹⁷ Paradoxically, commentators of a

²¹⁶Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [1976], rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 166-167.

²¹⁷Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 13-14, 95-97. See also

more Marxist bent have characterised Carlyle as an apologist for 'factory and machine work'.²¹⁸ For all their differences, these two interpretations have one thing in common, namely, anachronism. They both project the late nineteenth-century understanding of 'Industry' as large-scale factory production, and a corresponding social superstructure, back onto the early nineteenth century, and thus ascribe to Carlyle intentions that he never actually held. In the following chapter, it will be argued that Carlyle continued to use the term 'industry' with its older, more general, meaning, that is, to designate a disposition or trait of character, 'work' in general, or all forms of creative, useful labour, broadly understood.²¹⁹

In dealing with the question of 'industrialism', this chapter will also take issue with a long-standing tradition of attributing Carlyle's stress on the importance of work primarily to his 'Calvinist' upbringing. Of course, no historian has argued that Carlyle was actually a practising, professing 'Calvinist', but rather that his ideas regarding work represented a sort of secularised Calvinism, particularly in their emphasis on duty and self-sacrifice.²²⁰ In this sense, Simon Heffer,

Frederick William Roe: 'It is not too much to say that the central aim of Carlyle's life-work... was to save man... from the crushing effects of industrialism' (Roe, *The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin* [1921], new ed. [New York: Gordian Press, 1970], 88).

218Philip Rosenberg, *The Seventh Hero: Thomas Carlyle and the Theory of Radical Activism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 163-165, and Rob Breton, *Gospels and Grit: Work and Labour in Carlyle, Conrad, and Orwell* (Toronto and Buffalo NY: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 40-42. Similarly, Herbert Sussman writes: 'Thomas Carlyle and the railway both launched themselves upon England in the same decade. Both had spent their early years in obscurity in the North... Both had aroused moderate public interest in the 1820s, but not until the 1830s had they each become famous'. Sussman also refers to Carlyle's 'exultation at the heroic labour of *mechanized* England' (Sussman, 'Transcendentalism and the Machine: Thomas Carlyle', in his *Victorians and the Machine: The Literary Response to Technology* [Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1968], 13-40 [13-13, emphasis added]).

219For a general overview of the concept and its history, see Dietrich Hilger and Lucian Hölscher, 'Industrie, Gewerbe', in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Brunner, Conze and Koselleck, Vol. III (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), esp. 245-249, 264-267, 275-278, 286-291.

220The classic statement of is Charles Frederick Harrold, 'The Nature of Carlyle's Calvinism', in *Studies in Philology*, 33:3 (1936), 475-486 (482-483). Elsewhere, Harrold insisted that Carlyle's early writings on German literature were merely a means to 'vindicate for himself the spirit and essential truth of the creed of Ecclefechan', and that he ultimately remained 'a Calvinist shorn of his theology'. See his *Carlyle and German Thought, 1819-1834* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1934), 7, 216-224, 237. However, this notion is by now a commonplace in the secondary literature. For instance, Herbert Sussman claimed that Carlyle had 'learned from his Calvinist parents that the ceaseless round of farm labor [sic.] was not an unfortunate necessity but a moral imperative', and that Carlyle provides 'the perfect illustration of Max Weber's thesis that the doctrine of earthly vocation as a "calling" enabled the Calvinist to channel his spiritual energies into the activities of capitalism' (Sussman, 'Transcendentalism and the Machine', 25-26). According to G. B. Tennyson, 'because Carlyle conceived of a higher force outside space and time, his orientation remained basically Christian' (Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus: The Genesis, Structure, and Style of Thomas Carlyle's First Major Work* [Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965], 318). According to Ian Campbell, Carlyle's 'Gospel of Work' was 'strongly conceived in Christian terms', being 'a direct inheritance from the Calvinist admonitions of Carlyle's boyhood church' (Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle* [1974], new ed. [Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 1993], 178, 116). To follow Simon Heffer, Carlyle's reading of German literature 'confirmed for him the concepts of work and duty, familiar from his Calvinist upbringing' (*Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995], 53). According to John Morrow, Carlyle's ideas about 'work' were due to 'the particular Christian atmosphere in which Carlyle was raised' (*Thomas Carlyle* [London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006]), 49). For his part, Fred Kaplan stresses 'the deep emotional patterns instilled in [Carlyle] by his stern father and pietistic mother' (*Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* [Ithaca NY: Cornell

for instance, suggests that while Carlyle was not a Christian, he might usefully be understood as a 'post-Christian'.²²¹ Of course, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, I do not wish to deny the importance of Carlyle's upbringing, or of the personal example of his parents. However, I do think it is worth looking a little more closely at the language and the ideas which Carlyle used to interpret and articulate this experience. In this regard, the following chapter will argue that Carlyle's language was more 'pre-Christian' than 'post-Christian', and in fact owed far more to ancient Greek and Roman Stoicism than to 'Calvinism'. Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, and particularly their concept of 'industrialism', Carlyle re-situated a number of Stoic themes into the world of work. In particular, Carlyle, like the Stoics, understood freedom in terms of 'self-mastery', and increasingly came to argue that work might serve as an effective means to the latter.²²² Moreover, using the concept of 'industrialism', Carlyle also displaced a number of classical, and particularly Roman, notions of virtue, duty, and heroic self-sacrifice from war into work. As a discussion of the reception of Carlyle in the periodical press will suggest, contemporaries thus often accused Carlyle of having resurrected the theories of heathen philosophers, and particularly those of the Stoics, as if Christianity had never happened. However, as will be seen, other commentators responded far more positively to Carlyle. In particular, his ideas provided an important resource for 'secularist' thinkers attempting to formulate a non-Christian ethics, rooted in notions of duty, solidarity, and work.

University Press, 1983], 96-97). According to A. L. Le Quesne, Carlyle's emphasis on 'practical work' reflected 'the influence of his childhood Puritanism' (Le Quesne, *Carlyle* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982], 11-12).

²²¹Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, 4, 18. Similarly, according to Norman Vance, 'whatever' Carlyle 'may have said', he ultimately belonged within a broad tradition of 'Christian manliness' (Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 42). This claim has been echoed by Stefan Collini, who also associates Carlyle with the phenomenon of 'Christian manliness' (*Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], 185-189).

²²²In this sense, the chapter will contribute to some new areas of research in the history of republicanism. Whereas earlier approaches emphasised liberty as 'non-domination' by external forces, leaving the personality of the individual citizen unexamined (e.g. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 41, 68-70), more recent efforts have begun to take a somewhat different direction. For instance, Eric Nelson has shed new light on the Greek tradition in republican thought, according to which liberty consisted in a life conformable to the laws of nature (*The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 8-12), while Douglas Moggach, in his study of the Young Hegelian philosopher Bruno Bauer, has referred to a 'republican rigorism', which demanded that individual citizens undergo a 'positive self-transformation', eliminating all selfish impulses and becoming members of 'a new republican community of self-determining rational individuals' (Moggach, *The Philosophy and Politics of Bruno Bauer* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 110-111, and idem., 'Republican Rigorism and Emancipation in Bruno Bauer', in *The New Hegelians: Politics and Philosophy in the Hegelian School*, ed. Moggach [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 114-135 [116-117]). Most recently, Duncan Kelly has explored the history of liberty as 'propriety', according to which to be free was to be master of one's own person, and to thus be able to act autonomously (*The Propriety of Liberty: Persons, Passions and Judgement in Modern Political Thought* [Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011], 22, 43).

I.

FROM EPICUREANISM TO UTILITARIANISM (1815-1830)

As is well known, Carlyle was a vociferous critic of the 'utilitarianism' of Jeremy Bentham. However, as Francis Jeffrey, a friend and correspondent of Carlyle, pointed out in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1804, Bentham was far from being the discoverer of the principle of 'utility'.²²³ Indeed, it is crucial to recognise that Carlyle's critique of Bentham was part of a more general hostility towards Epicurean morality, of which Benthamism was but an extension. According to the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, all good and bad ultimately derived from sensations of pleasure and pain. In other words, what was pleasurable was 'good', while what was painful was 'bad'.²²⁴ During the eighteenth-century, the teachings of Epicurus were given new life in the writings of David Hume. For instance, in his *Essays*, Hume proceeded in accordance with the Epicurean assumption that all men were ultimately driven by their appetite for pleasure. As John Robertson has shown, in essays such as 'Of Commerce' and 'On Luxury', Hume displayed a characteristically Epicurean appreciation for the pleasure and 'utility' that could be derived from the self-regarding passions, implying that happiness ultimately consisted in the gratification of the senses. Moreover, Hume also suggested that these passions might provide a basis for human sociability. In particular, the 'esteem' of others being a pleasurable sensation, self-interested individuals would seek to cultivate a 'reputation', including through the performance of acts commonly perceived to be 'virtuous'.²²⁵ In short, as Jeffrey pointed out in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1808, Hume was 'chiefly responsible for the Epicurean and ignoble stream of sentiment' that had tended to undermine public spirit, and to validate the pursuit of luxury and self-interest.²²⁶ Despite his later reputation as the scourge of utilitarianism, the young Carlyle not only read, but also greatly appreciated Hume's *Essays*. In 1815, he informed a correspondent that the 'best book' he had recently read was 'Hume's Essays, political and literary'.²²⁷ Moreover, Carlyle drew particular attention to the essay entitled 'Of the Practical Consequences of of Natural Religion', in which Hume addressed his readers through the persona

223Jeffrey, review of Bentham's *Principes de législation*, in *Edinburgh Review* (Apr. 1804), cited in Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review 1802-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 93.

224See A. A. Long, 'Pleasure and Utility: The Virtues of Being Epicurean', in his *From Epicurus to Epictetus*, 178-201 (180-182, 187-189).

225John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 306-308, 317-318, 363-366.

226Jeffrey in *Edinburgh Review* (July 1808), cited in Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society*, 89-90. As Fontana points out, Jeffrey's censures were echoed by other contributors to the *Review* (ibid.).

227TC to Thomas Murray, 21st June 1815, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-), 1:52-56.

'Epicurus'.²²⁸ The young Carlyle was thus well-acquainted with the Epicureanism of Hume, later giving a succinct outline of the latter in his own *Lectures on the History of Literature*.²²⁹

However, over subsequent years, Carlyle became increasingly critical of Epicurean morality, particularly as expressed in the 'utilitarianism' of Jeremy Bentham, which he claimed to have 'believed in' for around 'three months'.²³⁰ According to A. A. Long, ancient critics had often accused Epicurus of advocating a selfish, irrational hedonism.²³¹ Amongst such critics were the Stoics, for whom 'pleasure' (*hēdonē*), and indeed 'longing' (*hēdonē*), were amongst those passions to which the wise man ought to be 'impassive' (*apathēs*). As Long explains, the Stoics thus believed that surrendering to one's passions was 'slavish', and that 'pitting strictly personal and subjective affect against the divinely determined course of events' was 'irrational, pointless, a gross failure to live in accordance with the necessary facts of life'.²³² Moreover, during the eighteenth century, these Stoic themes were reiterated by 'Scottish Enlightenment' thinkers such as Francis Hutcheson and Adam Ferguson, who sought to oppose what they saw as a resurgent Epicureanism, with its attendant validation of self-interest, sensuality, and luxury.²³³ As we shall see in the following section, Carlyle was well-versed in the writings of the Stoics, and their ideas seem to have informed his early criticisms of Benthamite utilitarianism. For instance, visiting Paris in 1824, Carlyle complained that its inhabitants could not 'live without artificial excitements, without *sensations agréables*'.²³⁴ Two years later, in *Wotton Reinfred* (1826-27), Carlyle presented Benthamism as the modern incarnation of Epicureanism, referring contemptuously to 'Utilitarians, Epicureans, and other tribes of the avowed alien'.²³⁵ Having fundamentally misconstrued human nature, the Benthamites had failed to

228TC to Robert Mitchell, 24th May 1815, *CL* 1:45-49. On this essay, see Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, 306-308. Three years later, in 1818, Carlyle re-read the essays, telling a correspondent that 'the second volume is not finished yet – and I do not like what I have read of any thing so well as I did the first' (TC to Robert Mitchell, 16th Feb. 1818, *CL* 1:118-122).

229Carlyle told his listeners: 'Hume considered virtue to be the same as expediency, profit; that all useful things were virtues; that people in old times found the utility of the thing... agreed that for the sake of keeping society together, they would patronise such things as were useful to one another, and consecrate them by some strong sanction, and that was the origin of virtue' (*Lectures on the History of Literature* [delivered 1838], ed. Greene [London: Ellis and Elvey, 1892], 182).

230TC to John A. Carlyle, 10th Aug. 1824, *CL* 3:120-124.

231A. A. Long, 'Pleasure and Utility', 180-182, 187-189. As Long points out, this was unjust, since Epicurus had in fact recommended moderation, 'prudence', and 'sober reasoning'.

232A. A. Long, 'Epictetus on Understanding and Managing Emotions', in his *From Epicurus to Epictetus*, 378-394 (380-381, 389).

233See Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, 284-287, and Iain McDaniel, *Adam Ferguson in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Roman Past and Europe's Future* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 66-78.

234TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 28th Oct. 1824, *CL* 3:180-181. See also TC to John A. Carlyle, 7th Nov. 1824, *CL* 3:185-187.

235'Wotton Reinfred: A Romance' [unfinished draft of a novel, written 1826-1827], in *The Last Words of Thomas Carlyle* (Boston MA: Dana Estates & Company, 1892), 71. Indeed, as Olle Holmberg pointed out some time ago, Bentham was not Carlyle's only 'Epicurean' target in *Wotton Reinfred*, Hume also being a constant, if not always explicitly acknowledged, interlocutor. See Holmberg, *David Hume in Carlyle's Sartor Resartus* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerups Förlag, 1934), 4.

understand that the pursuit of pleasure led not to happiness, but rather its contrary. As Carlyle wrote to Jane Baillie Welsh in 1826:

It is not Nature that made men unhappy; but their own despicable perversities... They want to be happy, and by *happiness* they mean *pleasure*, a series of *passive* enjoyments: if they had a quarter of an eye they would see that there not only was not but could not be such a thing in God's creation.²³⁶

Similar notions were in evidence in an article on 'Burns' (1828), in which Carlyle remarked contemptuously of the poet: 'He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal Cornucopia of enjoyments, not earned by his labour, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny'.²³⁷ As Ralph Jessop drolly remarks, 'happiness' had by this point become for Carlyle 'an insubstantial concept only realizable by vulgar stupidity'.²³⁸ (Indeed, as Jessop points out, Carlyle was perhaps employing the technique of *reductio ad absurdum*, which had already been used by a number of Scottish 'Common-Sense' philosophers in their polemics against Hume).²³⁹ In sum, despite his early enthusiasm for Hume, Carlyle had by the mid-1820s become a firm critic of Epicureanism and utilitarianism, arguing that these had dangerous implications of selfishness, sensuality, and passivity. Moreover, Carlyle's early criticisms of Epicureanism strongly resembled those of the ancient Stoics, a subject which will now be examined in greater detail.

STOICISM, SELF-MASTERY, AND VIRTUE (1815-1830)

In his recent book *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau*, Christopher Brooke provides an admirably concise summary of ancient Stoicism, which is worth citing in full:

Some of the characteristic doctrines of the Stoics were these: that God and the universe are coextensive with one another... The physical world is all that exists, and all events in that world are causally determined. The goal of human existence is to live in accordance with nature, which is to live rationally or virtuously. Virtue is the only genuine good, and it is sufficient for happiness. Other things that we might conventionally call goods, such as

²³⁶TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 19th July 1826, CL 4:116-117.

²³⁷'Burns' [1828], in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, People's Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), II:30.

²³⁸Ralph Jessop, *Carlyle and Scottish Thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 116.

²³⁹Ibid.

health or wealth, are, properly speaking, only 'preferred indifferents'... Most of the emotions that we experience are false judgements, and should be extirpated through Stoic therapies or spiritual exercises. If we can rid ourselves of these emotional responses, then we can live the good life in the passionless state the Stoics call *apatheia*, and to live the ideal life is to be the Stoic's sage.²⁴⁰

Thus, to be clear, stoicism might be considered a form of pantheism, in which the source of all being, characterised variously as “Spirit” (*pneuma*), “Reason” (*Logos*), Providence, and even Fate, pervades the whole world. In Stoic ethics, happiness is achieved by cultivating virtue, and virtue consists, in Seneca's words, in living in “conformity with nature”, that is, with the divine Reason or *Logos* that pervades the universe. For the Stoics, this was far more important than external circumstances, which were comparatively 'indifferent' to happiness.²⁴¹ Indeed, the term 'happiness' did not do justice to what a soul “lifted above every circumstance” would experience, this being better described as “joy”, a “severe matter”, according to Seneca.²⁴²

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, many commentators have attributed Carlyle's early ideas to the severities of his Calvinist upbringing. However, it ought to be borne in mind that language supplies the categories through which experience is interpreted and articulated.²⁴³ In this sense, the young Carlyle arguably owed more to ancient Stoics such as Epictetus and Seneca than he did to Jean Calvin.²⁴⁴ Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, this has hitherto passed unnoticed in the existing secondary literature.²⁴⁵ In 1818, Carlyle penned the following lucubrations regarding the Greek Stoics Cleanthes, Zeno and Epictetus:

in days of darkness—for there *are* days when my support (pride or whatever it is) has

240Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), xii.

241A. A. Long, 'Stoic Philosophers on Persons, Property-Ownership, and Community', in his *From Epicurus to Epictetus*, 335-359 (344-345, 358).

242James Woefel, "'The Beautiful Necessity': Emerson and the Stoic Tradition", in *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, 32:2 (May 2011), 122-138 (123-127).

243J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28-29.

244Carlyle later recalled that he 'knew nothing' of the 'Classics', 'for years after leaving College' (marginal notes to a biographical sketch by Friedrich Althaus [1866], in *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Clubbe [Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1974], 32-33). Carlyle left the University of Edinburgh in 1814, and the following references to the 'Classics' thus did indeed occur during the years 'after leaving College'.

245The nearest thing to an exception is William Savage Johnson, *Thomas Carlyle: A Study of His Literary Apprenticeship, 1814-1831* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1911), who notes in passing that Carlyle's early reading included 'Stoic philosophers' (6), and that his early writings stressed 'self-forgetfulness... a principle which reigns both in Stoical and Christian ethics' (32). However, the point needs to be developed at far greater length.

enough to do - I find it useful to remember that Cleanthes, whose [*Hymn to Zeus*] may last yet [an]other two thousand years, never murmured, when he laboured by night, as a street porter, that he might hear the lectures of Zeno, by day; and that Epictetus, the ill-used slave of a cruel tyrant's as wretched minion, wrote that [*Enchiridion*] which may fortify the soul of the latest inhabitant of Earth.²⁴⁶

Moreover, in another letter written the same year, Carlyle approvingly cited the maxim of 'our Stoic' Epictetus, '*suffer and abstain*'.²⁴⁷ In addition to Epictetus, the most striking example of Carlyle using the language of the Stoics to interpret his own experience related not to the Greeks, but rather to a Roman, namely, Seneca.²⁴⁸ In his epistle, 'Various Aspects of Virtue', Seneca had written:

For virtue needs nothing to set it off; it is its own great glory, and it hallows the body in which it dwells. A great man can spring from a hovel; so can a beautiful and great soul from an ugly and insignificant body... [such a] soul [is] superior alike to hardships and blandishments, yielding itself to neither extreme of fortune, rising above all blessings and tribulations, absolutely beautiful, perfectly equipped with grace as well as with strength, healthy and sinewy, unruffled, undismayed, one which no violence can shatter, one which acts of chance can neither exalt nor depress,—a soul like this is virtue itself.... fear means slavery. The honourable is wholly free from anxiety and is calm.²⁴⁹

In March 1823, Carlyle wrote to his brother:

I often think of our hard and laborious but hearty upbringing under our parental roof, and I feel a pride in reflecting how mind can conquer matter, how the true spirit of virtue and manly worth can illuminate the humblest destiny, and bring forth from the smoky walls of a

246TC to Robert Mitchell, 6th Nov. 1818, in *CL* 1:141-147. Carlyle writes the titles in Greek.

247TC to Thomas Murray, 28th July 1818, *CL* 1:135-137. For other references to Epictetus, see TC to James Johnston, 8th Jan. 1819, *CL* 1:155-159, TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 22nd Dec. 1823, *CL* 2:490-492, and TC to John A. Carlyle, 22nd Jan. 1825, *CL* 3:259-263.

248For later references to Seneca, including the *Epistulae Morales*, see *Sartor Resartus* [written 1830-1831, first published 1833-1834], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 197-198, TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 4th Sep. 1839, *CL* 11:177-180, TC to Emerson, 2nd July 1840, *CL* 12:182-186, and TC to Lady Ashburton, 24th Nov. 1848, *CL* 23:159-160. Carlyle also gave an account of Seneca in his *Lectures on the History of Literature* (1838), demonstrating that he was familiar with Seneca's works. However, the account was quite critical, Carlyle claiming that Seneca 'exaggerated the virtues... to an extreme quite ridiculous, asserting that there is no such thing as vice at all, that man is all powerful and like a God in this world, having it in his power to triumph over evils and calamities of all kinds by his mere will' (*Lectures on the History of Literature*, 52-53).

However, as we shall see, Carlyle would face the exact same criticisms from contemporary reviewers.

249Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, translated by Richard M. Gummere, 3 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1917-1925), Vol. II, Epistle LXVI.

cottage men that are void of *fear* and of *reproach*... I often think of my brother in his coarse substantial apparel, grasping the hilts of his plough with sinewy arms upon the hill side - going forth upon a *real* object... with a true man's heart in his bosom.²⁵⁰

Whereas Seneca has 'hovel', Carlyle has 'cottage'. Both have 'sinewy', and both stress how 'virtue' can banish 'fear'. Thus, while Carlyle did indeed grow up in a strict Calvinist setting, it seems that the language of classical stoicism helped him to interpret and articulate this experience. A few months later, Carlyle published the first instalment of his 'Life of Schiller' in the *London Magazine* (Oct. 1823 - Sep. 1824). Here, he purported to offer a summary of Schiller's *Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*. According to Carlyle, Schiller sought

to trace out and attempt to sanction for us a system of morality, in which the sublimest feelings of the Stoic and Christian are presented as but stages in our progress to the pinnacle of true human grandeur... [man,] at war with Fate, without help or the hope of help, is confidently called upon to rise into a calm cloudless height of internal activity and peace, and *be*, what he has fondly named himself, the god of this lower world.²⁵¹

In his assessment of this passage, Tom Lloyd wonders why Carlyle left out Schiller's concept of 'play', even though he would have been fully aware of it.²⁵² One possible answer is that Carlyle was still preoccupied with what he had read in Seneca, and was using the 'Life of Schiller' as an opportunity to process certain Stoic ideas. Indeed, the claims that man was 'at war with Fate', that he ought to aspire to become 'calm' ('without help'), and that he was capable of becoming 'the god of this lower world', were far more 'Stoic' than 'Christian'. Four years later, in 1828, Carlyle again cited Epictetus' maxim ('suffer and abstain'), before recommending submission to the laws of the fate as the only sure route to 'joy' (as noted above, another of Seneca's characteristic terms). Carlyle wrote:

Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity... but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity.²⁵³

During these years, Carlyle also began to make a name for himself as a translator and interpreter of German literature and philosophy. As both C. F. Harrold and Rosemary Ashton have

250TC to Alexander Carlyle, 8th Mar. 1823, *CL* 2:301-303.

251*The Life of Friedrich Schiller* [book edition 1825], People's edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), 100.

252Tom Lloyd, "High Air-Castles": Carlyle's Reactions to Schiller's Aesthetics', in *Victorian Institute Journal*, 12 (1984), 91-104 (93-94).

253'Burns' [1828], in *CME*, II:33.

demonstrated, Carlyle had at best a shaky grip on his subject matter, and, in particular, failed to understand many of the technical nuances of Kantian metaphysics.²⁵⁴ Moreover, according to Harrold, Carlyle remained 'the born Calvinist', using German doctrines to reconstruct 'a belief in the transcendent sovereignty of Right and in a world of immanent divine law'.²⁵⁵ However, one did not need to be a 'Calvinist' in order to hold such beliefs. In contrast, I would like to suggest that Carlyle in fact read the Germans as confirmation of the Stoic ideas he had already encountered, and as part of an ongoing confrontation between Stoicism and Epicureanism. For instance, in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, which Carlyle translated into English in 1824, Goethe reiterated a number of standard Stoic insights regarding self-mastery, and indifference to external circumstances. For instance, Goethe claimed that 'man's highest merit' was, 'as much as possible, to rule external circumstances, and as little as possible to let himself be ruled by them'. Moreover, Goethe also argued that 'he alone is worthy of respect', 'who labours to control his self-will'.²⁵⁶ In his preface to *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (1827), Carlyle suggested that Goethe himself lived up to these maxims, writing that his 'faculties and feelings' were 'not fettered or prostrated under the iron sway of Passion, but led and guided in kindly union under the mild sway of Reason'.²⁵⁷ Indeed, it is worth noting that Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom Carlyle first met in 1833, considered Goethe's ideal of *Bildung*, or self-cultivation, as inheriting and confirming the Stoic tradition of rational autonomy.²⁵⁸ In 'Jean Paul Richter Again' (1830), Carlyle again returned to the subject of Stoicism, writing, with regard to the young Richter:

A high, cheerful Stoicism grew up in the man. Poverty, Pain, and all Evil... he learned to despise... During this sad period, he wrote out for himself a little manual of practical philosophy, naming it *Andachtsbuch* (Book of Devotion), which contains such maxims as these: 'Every unpleasant feeling is a sign that I have become untrue to my resolutions. - Epictetus was not unhappy'.

'These', Carlyle continued, were 'wise maxims for so young a man'.²⁵⁹ Indeed, a similar point might be made regarding Carlyle's (limited) engagement with Kant. As Brooke points out, many Stoic

²⁵⁴See Charles Frederick Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought, 1819-1834* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1934), ch. V, and Rosemary Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought, 1800-1860* (London: Libris, 1994), 94-94.

²⁵⁵Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought*, 235.

²⁵⁶*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship. A Novel. From the German of Goethe*, trans. Carlyle (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd / London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1824), II:328, I:106-107, III:113.

²⁵⁷'Goethe', preface to *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, trans. Carlyle, 18.

²⁵⁸James Woefel, "'The Beautiful Necessity': Emerson and the Stoic Tradition", in *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, 32:2 (May 2011), 122-138 (131).

²⁵⁹'Jean Paul Richter Again' [1830], *CME* III:20-21.

ideas were given fresh expression in Kant's 'practical philosophy', at the core of which stood the 'notion of freedom as rational autonomy'.²⁶⁰ For Carlyle, the most important aspect of Kant's philosophy was his distinction between *Verstand* (Understanding) and *Vernunft* (Reason). As Carlyle explained in 'The State of German Literature' (1827), this distinction was chiefly valuable insofar as it provided an antidote to the Epicurean utilitarianism of Hume.²⁶¹ The 'Kantists', he wrote, 'would assail Hume... in the centre of his citadel', denying 'his first principle, that Sense is the only inlet of Knowledge'. Continuing, Carlyle explained that when 'Understanding' began to 'speculate of Virtue, it ends in *Utility*, making Prudence and a sufficiently cunning love of Self, the highest good'. In opposition, the 'Kantists' insisted that 'Virtue is Virtue, and not Prudence', and that to 'discern these truths is the highest province of Reason'.²⁶² Here, then, is the characteristically Stoic doctrine that 'Virtue' and 'Reason' are the only genuine goods. In the same article, Carlyle also gave a brief account of Fichte, a former student of Kant, whose ideas, to use Brooke's phrase, could also 'look very Stoic indeed'.²⁶³ As Carlyle explained:

According to Fichte, there is a 'Divine Idea' pervading the visible universe... To the mass of men this Divine Idea of the world lies hidden; yet to discern it, to seize it, and live wholly in it, is the condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge and freedom.

'Fichte's metaphysical theory', Carlyle continued, 'may be called into question', 'but the sublime stoicism of his sentiments will find some response in many a heart'.²⁶⁴ Moreover, several pages later, Carlyle again returned to Fichte, referring to him as a 'cold, colossal, adamant spirit, standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa'.²⁶⁵ In sum, Carlyle's earlier reading of the Stoics would have provided him with guidelines in interpreting the Germans, and the Germans would have served to confirm for him the doctrines of the Stoics.

Before moving on to look at the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism', it is necessary to briefly touch upon one further aspect of Fichte's thought. According to Peter Allen Dale, Fichte used the term 'Industry' to denote the 'impressing of the Idea upon the world', through various 'modes' of

²⁶⁰Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 204-205.

²⁶¹As Ralph Jessop points out, Carlyle thus stood in a long Scottish 'Common-Sense' tradition of using Kant as an antidote to the sceptical materialism of Hume (Jessop, *Carlyle and Scottish Thought*, 123-128, 140).

²⁶²'State of German Literature' [1827], *CME* I: 69-70.

²⁶³Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 204-205.

²⁶⁴'State of German Literature', 49-51. Carlyle was referring to Fichte's *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten* (1805).

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 65. I.e., the school of the Stoics.

'political, philosophical, religious, scientific, and artistic' activity. This notion, Allen Dale suggests, 'almost certainly' became 'Carlyle's doctrine of *work*'.²⁶⁶ However, this claim is perhaps somewhat problematic. As Jonathan Mendilow points out, by 'Industry', Fichte meant 'only the externalisation of the mind's activity through such media as art or philosophy', whereas Carlyle 'added a physical dimension', making it 'the cardinal feature' of his 'concept of man'.²⁶⁷ Moreover, in his later writings, Carlyle frequently referred not only to 'industry', but also to 'industrialism', the distinctive doctrine of the Saint-Simonians.²⁶⁸ However, it might be suggested that Carlyle's interest in Fichte served to prepare and facilitate his engagement with the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism'. Indeed, an interesting example of how this might have occurred is provided by an article that appeared in a French newspaper, *Le Catholique*, in 1827.²⁶⁹ Here, the author of the article, the Baron d'Eckstein, wrote:

A German philosopher, Fichte, has recently renovated the stoicism of antiquity... According to Fichte, there is nothing in the world but will and freedom. Matter is powerless to oppose them: a resolute will, guided by a truly free spirit, overturns and surpasses it. [The philosophy of Fichte] is a stoicism purified, liberated from the old pantheism... It is a practical stoicism, the philosophy of life... According to this theory, man works, he lives by work, but, for him, work is not the end of life. The end is the freedom of the spirit of the individual, liberated from the ties of matter. Transformed into a means of man's social existence, matter testifies to the first triumph of the human will; its second triumph is allowing the spirit to reign over the work itself, rendering the worker a free man and a philosopher.

This 'transcendental industrialism', claimed the Baron, had since been 'set in motion by the industrial school in France'.²⁷⁰

266Peter Allen Dale, *The Victorian Critic and the Idea of History: Carlyle, Arnold, Pater* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), 39-42.

267Jonathan Mendilow, *The Romantic Tradition in British Political Thought* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 117.

268'Wotton Reinfred', 9.

269I owe the reference to Isaac Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State: Perpetual Peace and Commercial Society from Rousseau to Fichte* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 156.

270Baron d'Eckstein, 'De l'Industrialisme', in *Le Catholique, ouvrage périodique*, 5 (1827), 233-263 (239-241).

II.

SAINT-SIMON AND THE SAINT-SIMONIANS: *INDUSTRIE* AND *INDUSTRIALISME* (1830-1832)

In eighteenth-century France, the concept of *industrie* had continued to refer primarily to a general disposition or trait of character, or, indeed, to 'work' in general, rather than to mechanised forms of production.²⁷¹ However, the concept was invested with much greater political significance during the French Revolution. In response to the Terror, the 'Ideologues' argued that the French people, having suffered for centuries under the demoralising influence of absolutism, had become incapable of sustaining a democratic republic. For the Ideologues, *industrie* offered a means to reform popular manners, and to inculcate (republican) virtues such as frugality, independence, and public spirit. It was hoped that this would, in turn, provide a basis for the adoption of a republican constitution sometime in the future.²⁷² Over subsequent years, a number of thinkers continued to develop this insight, shifting the emphasis away from virtue in politics towards virtue in work, and identifying *industrie* as the most effective form of patriotism.²⁷³ Perhaps the most important of the thinkers to effect such a transformation was Jean-Baptiste Say, for whom *industrie* comprised all forms of creative, useful work, material or immaterial.²⁷⁴ Moreover, as Richard Whatmore has pointed out, Say increasingly came to distinguish political economy from politics, pinning his hopes on *industrie* to such an extent that political constitutions became almost a matter of indifference. In doing so, Say made rather free use of Bentham's doctrine of 'utility', arguing that the most 'useful' act was that which brought the most benefit to society as a whole.²⁷⁵ Thus, whereas for Bentham and his followers, it fell to the individual to define what was useful (that, is pleasurable) to him, Say put a more social spin on the concept, relating it to a broadly civic humanist understanding of the common good. In sum, the concept of *industrie* as used by Say did not refer to the level of

271 See Florian Schui, *Early Debates About Industry: Voltaire and His Contemporaries* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 9-10, 32-33, 174-176.

272 See Michael James, 'Pierre-Louis Roederer, Jean-Baptiste Say, and the concept of *industrie*', in *History of Political Economy*, 9:4 (1977), 455-475, Thomas F. Kaiser, 'Politics and political economy in the thought of the Ideologues', in *History of Political Economy*, 12:2 (1980), 141-160, and Richard Whatmore, *Republicanism and the French Revolution: An Intellectual History of Jean-Baptiste Say's Political Economy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 4, ch. 5 and ch. 6.

273 See Roberto Romani, *National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 99-111.

274 See Edgard Allix, 'J.-B. Say et les origines de l'industrialisme', in *Revue d'économie politique*, 24 (1910), 303-313, 341-363.

275 See Whatmore, *Republicanism and the French Revolution*, ch. 10, also p. 207-210.

technology or to factory production, being rather, as Gareth Stedman Jones has put it, the 'binding ethos of a modern republic'.²⁷⁶

During the Restoration (1815-1830), Say's ideas were extremely influential within liberal circles.²⁷⁷ His disciples included, for instance, both Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer, the editors of the *Censeur européen*, and Henri de Saint-Simon, all of whom were regular visitors to Say's salon.²⁷⁸ In 1827, Dunoyer published an 'Historical Sketch of the Doctrines commonly referred to as Industrialism' in the *Revue encyclopédique*. In it, Dunoyer explained that whereas earlier thinkers had tended to stigmatise commercial activity, with its attendant greed and materialism, as a source of 'corruption and weakness', he and his colleagues considered it to be 'the vital principle' of modern society. Moreover, according to Dunoyer, the sole object of political institutions ought to be the furtherance of *industrie*, that is, 'human activity in all its useful applications'.²⁷⁹ Carlyle read this article shortly after its publication, commenting upon it in his notebook.²⁸⁰ Thus, he was already familiar with the concept of industrialism, even before he encountered it in the writings of Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians.

Having made first contact with the latter in 1830, Carlyle found the concept of industrialism restated in Saint-Simon's *L'Industrie* (1818). Here, Saint-Simon had argued:

1. That the industrial class is the only useful class. 2. That this class must continually become more numerous, growing at the expense of the others, and ultimately becoming the *only class*. 3. That all laws and administrative measures might be judged against this sole criterion: *are they useful or harmful to industry?*²⁸¹

276See Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Industrie, Pauperism and the Hanoverian State', Working Paper, Centre for History and Economics, University of Cambridge (Jan. 1994), 7-10, and idem., *An End to Poverty? A Historical Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 137-138, 161.

277David Hart refers to 'le moment Say' ('Class, Slavery and the Industrial Theory of History in French Liberal Thought, 1814-1830: The Contribution of Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer', unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge (1994), 19.

278See Ephraïm Harpaz, 'Le Censeur européen, Histoire d'un journal industrialiste', in *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, XXXVII (1959), 204-205, Shirley M. Gruner, *Economic Materialism and Social Moralism: A Study in the History of Ideas in France from the Latter Part of the 18th Century to the Middle of the 19th Century* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 93-127, and Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Saint-Simon: L'utopie ou la raison en actes* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 2001), 296.

279Charles Dunoyer, 'Esquisse historique des doctrines auxquelles on a donné le nom d'Industrialisme', in *Revue encyclopédique* [Feb. 1827], reprinted in *Oeuvres de Charles Dunoyer* (Paris: Guillaumin et Cie., 1886), III:173-199, here 177-181.

280Carlyle wrote of Dunoyer's presentation of industrialism: 'God help us! has not this been understood and admitted in all systems of political philosophy for the last century?' (journal entry c. March 1827, *Two Notebooks*, 113). He was perhaps referring to notions of 'commercial society', as embodied, for instance in the writings of the Scottish Enlightenment.

281Saint-Simon, *L'Industrie, ou Discussions politiques, morales et philosophiques, dans l'intérêt des hommes livrés à*

Moreover, as Dunoyer remarked in his article, Saint-Simon had extended the concept of *industrie* to intellectual work and art, and, in this sense, his system would be more aptly described as '*scientifico-artistico-industriel*'.²⁸² This was reflected in *L'Industrie*, where Saint-Simon promised to 'prove to *practical industry*, that *theoretical industry* can be of use to it', and argued that it was 'in the interest' of the former to 'make common cause' with the latter.²⁸³ Furthermore, as Michel Bellet has recently noted, Saint-Simon, like Say, also drew upon Bentham's principle of 'utility', while giving the latter a more social interpretation.²⁸⁴ For instance, in the *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), Saint-Simon echoed Bentham's maxim of the 'greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number', writing:

in accordance with the principle that God gave to men as a rule of conduct, they must organise their society in the manner most advantageous to the greatest possible number: they must make the object of all their works, of all their actions, the improvement of the moral and physical condition of the most numerous class, as promptly and as completely as is possible.²⁸⁵

In this sense, Saint-Simon, in his concept of *industrie*, yoked Bentham's principle of 'utility' into the service of a philanthropic moral, emphasising that work ought to be undertaken for the benefit of others.

Various criticisms of 'industrialism' in its various forms, and notably the stress the doctrine placed on 'utility', were soon forthcoming. For instance, in 1825 Stendhal argued that the *industriels* were fundamentally self-interested, and suggested that, in desiring political recognition, they were comparable to a man who expected public acclaim for making himself dinner.²⁸⁶ For his part, Benjamin Constant reiterated traditional civic-humanist concerns about the corrupting power of commerce, fearing that 'industrialism' would encourage widespread selfishness, and a preference for

des travaux utiles et indépendans, tome quatrième, premier cahier (Paris: Chez Verdière, 1818), 1.

282Dunoyer, 'Esquisse historique', 186, 193.

283Saint-Simon, *L'Industrie*, tome quatrième, premier cahier, 3.

284Michel Bellet, 'Saint-simonisme et utilitarisme: Saint-Simon lecteur de Bentham', in *Bentham et la France: fortune et infortunes de l'utilitarisme*, ed. de Champs and Cléro (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2009), 177-96. See also See Pierre Musso, *Saint-Simon, l'industrialisme contre l'État* (La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 2010), 62-69, 119-123, 149-152, 175-177.

285Saint-Simon, *Nouveau Christianisme, dialogues entre un conservateur et un novateur* (Paris: Bossange Père and A. Sautet et Cie., 1825), 3, 8. See also 17.

286Stendhal, *D'un Nouveau Complot contre les industriels* (Paris: Sautet, 1825), 3-5, 11-13.

material gain over political liberty and participation.²⁸⁷ Over subsequent years, the Saint-Simonians sought to respond to such criticisms, making clear that they did not uncritically endorse *industrie* in its existing forms. These were indeed marked by the kind of selfishness and greed that Stendhal and Constant deplored. As the Saint-Simonians explained in the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*:

we work with ardour, with passion; but what is the aim of this work? Is it that humanity will no longer suffer poverty and ignorance that the *industriel* and the *savant* expire in sweat and sleeplessness? No, it is to enrich the *Me*, to enlighten the *Me*; it is to satisfy purely selfish appetites, physical and intellectual.²⁸⁸

In order to distinguish their vision of what industrialism could be, from what industrialism actually was, the Saint-Simonians brought the idea of a philanthropic 'New Christianity' to the fore. Several of the leading Saint-Simonians, notably Enfantin, Bazard, and Laurent, were well-acquainted with the writings of Bentham, having been not only readers, but also commentators and translators.²⁸⁹ However, in a review of Carlyle's 'Signs of the Times', P.-M. Laurent made clear that the Saint-Simonians, like Say and Saint-Simon, did not endorse Bentham's definition of 'utility' in terms of individual pleasure. Using the same classical frame of reference as Carlyle, Laurent explained that this 'mean and degrading principle' had served to reproduce 'in the writings of Helvetius, Saint-Lambert and Bentham', the 'crude sensualism' of 'Carneades, Epicurus and Anniceris'.²⁹⁰ According to the Saint-Simonians, Bentham had been right to argue that 'institutions could only be legitimised through reference to their *utility*'. However, he had erred in leaving the definition of 'utility' solely to individuals, and failing to develop any theory of '*social utility*'.²⁹¹ The Saint-Simonians thus gave clear expression to an idea implicit in the works of Say and Saint-Simon. As Laurent had put it in another article, the task was to bring about 'the regularised concert of all spiritual forces, so as to make the activities of individuals converge insofar as possible on a single aim, the well-being and prosperity of the greatest number'.²⁹² In this sense, the Saint-Simonians sought to detach the

287See Helena Rosenblatt, 'Re-evaluating Benjamin Constant's Liberalism: Industrialism, Saint-Simonianism and the Restoration years', in *History of European Ideas*, 30:1 (2004), 23-37, and Victor del Litto, 'Stendhal, Constant et l'industrialisme', in *Benjamin Constant: Actes du Congrès de Lausanne* (Geneva: Droz, 1968), 65-67. See also Marie-Laure Leroy, 'Constant lecteur de Bentham: egoïsme, droit, utilité', in *Bentham et la France*, op. cit., 153-163.

288*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année. 1829. Seconde Édition* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur and A. Mesnier, 1830), 257-259.

289See Arthur John Booth, *Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism: A Chapter in the History of Socialism in France* [1871] (Amsterdam: Liberac N.V. Publishers, 1970), 100-101, Willy Spühler, *Der Saint-Simonismus: Lehre und Leben von Saint-Amand Bazard* (Zurich: Girsberger, 1926), 50-60, Janko Zagar, 'Bentham et la France', thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris (1958), 252-262.

290Paul-Mathieu Laurent, 'Caractère de notre époque, 2eme article', in *Organisateur*, 36 (18th Apr. 1830), 2-3.

291*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 240-242.

292[P.-M. Laurent], 'Coup-d'Oeil historique sur le pouvoir spirituel', in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 77-80.

principles of utility and industrialism from their egotistic presumptions, and to harness them to a philanthropic moral, rooted in a notion of 'social utility'.

Indeed, British commentators were quick to perceive the Saint-Simonians' debts to Bentham. For instance, according to Robert Southey, the Saint-Simonians considered Bentham 'to be among political philosophers, what the giraffe is among quadrupeds', while the *Times* noted that the 'professed object' of the Saint-Simonians was 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'.²⁹³ Similarly, a contributor to *Fraser's Magazine* conceded that Saint-Simon had been right to 'proclaim industry as the definitive end of human society', if only in relation to 'the narrow and material circle of utility', while, several years later, a writer in the *Dublin Review* noted that Saint-Simonism shared 'many of the features of the Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham'.²⁹⁴ For their part, orthodox Benthamites, such as Thomas Perronet Thompson, sought to refute the heretical notion of 'social utility', reaffirming Bentham's belief that self-interested individuals ought to be left to define utility however they saw fit.²⁹⁵

Of course, this Saint-Simonian vision of industrialism and a 'New Christianity' presupposed a moral transformation on the part of individual agents. As Duncan Kelly has recently noted, Montesquieu was one of a number of thinkers for whom 'liberty' consisted in 'propriety' or self-mastery.²⁹⁶ In the *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), Montesquieu gave succinct expression to this idea, writing that liberty 'can consist only in having the power to do what one should want to do'.²⁹⁷ In the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians seem to have appropriated this formula, informing their readers that 'liberty' consisted 'above all' in 'loving and desiring that which one *must* do'.²⁹⁸ Indeed, the Saint-Simonian understanding of industrialism as a social, philanthropic enterprise seems to have presupposed a sense of duty, and even virtue, on the part of individual agents. For instance, in the *Doctrine*, the Saint-Simonians wrote that 'to expand the frontiers of knowledge and

293[Southey], 'Doctrine de Saint-Simon: New Distribution of Property', in the *Quarterly Review*, XLV (July 1831), 433-434; 'The Saint-Simonians', in *The Times* (7th Apr. 1832).

294'Fair-Play', 'Letter on the Doctrine of St. Simon', in *Fraser's Magazine*, V (July 1832), 666 (this article has been tentatively attributed to Carlyle by Hill Shine, 'Carlyle and *Fraser's* "Letter on the Doctrine of St. Simon"', in *Notes and Queries*, 171 [24th Oct. 1936], 291-293. However, this seems unlikely); 'Saint-Simonism', in the *Dublin Review*, IV (Jan. 1838), 138.

295[Perronet Thompson], 'Saint-Simonianism, &c.', in *Westminster Review*, XXXII (Apr. 1832), 296-300, 308-309. Perronet Thompson is identified as the author in JSM to TC, 22nd Oct. 1832, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part I', ed. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963). A similar point was made by Howard Elphinstone in a letter to Gustave d'Eichthal, n.d., MS 14385/1, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris.

296Kelly, *The Propriety of Liberty*, 88-89.

297Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Cohler, Miller and Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 155, cited in Kelly, *The Propriety of Liberty*, 108-109.

298*Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année. 1829-1830* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur, 1830), 10-11.

of industry' would be 'the *force* and the *courage*, the Virtue of the future', 'the means by which we will once again warrant the terms *nobility* and *glory*'.²⁹⁹

III.

CARLYLE'S INITIAL RESPONSE (1830-1832)

In a retrospect of Carlyle's literary career, James Martineau noted that in his essays of the 1820s, Carlyle had propounded a (pseudo-) Kantian distinction between "Understanding" and "Reason", setting up 'the latter as the organ for apprehending the ideal essence, which is the true *real* of things'. However, continued Martineau, 'not less manifestly' did Carlyle 'soon break away from this path in despair'. Particularly, in an essay entitled 'Characteristics', published in 1831, Carlyle, as Martineau put it, first 'broached' his 'celebrated doctrine of "Unconsciousness:" which teaches that all self-knowledge is a curse, and introspection a disease; that the true health of a man is to have a soul without being aware of it... [and] to fling out the products of creative genius without looking at them'. 'What', asked Martineau, 'can have befallen in the interval?'³⁰⁰ The simple answer is, Saint-Simonism. Indeed, shortly after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle made an explicit reference to the concept of industrialism, writing, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), of 'Industrialism and the Government of the Wisest'.³⁰¹ In those of his earlier writings referred to above, Carlyle, in line with the writings of the Stoics, had stressed the importance of 'Reason' as the only genuine good. However, following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle came to closely identify 'Reason' with 'Work'. In doing so, he also rejected the *vita contemplativa* in favour of the *vita activa*. In the article referred to by Martineau, 'Characteristics' (Dec. 1831), Carlyle wrote that 'Self-contemplation' was to be considered 'the symptom of disease', insofar as 'Virtue, when it can be philosophised of, has become aware of itself, is sickly and beginning to decline'. In contrast, the 'good man' was 'he who *works* continually in welldoing'.³⁰² The following year, in April 1832, Carlyle wrote in his notebook:

A Question arises, whether there ought to be, in a perfect society, *any* class of purely speculative men? Whether all men should not be of active employment and habituate; their

299 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 305.

300 'Personal Influences on our Present Theology: Newman – Coleridge – Carlyle', in *The National Review*, 3 (1856), 449-494 (485-486).

301 *Sartor Resartus*, 92, see also 35, 86.

302 'Characteristics' [Dec. 1831], in *CME*, IV:7-8

speculation only growing out of their activity, and incidental thereto? ³⁰³

Some years later, in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle famously reiterated this precept, arguing that the ancient Greek maxim 'Know thyself' had been superseded by the 'latest Gospel in this world', 'Know thy work and do it'.³⁰⁴ In the following two sections, it will be argued that the Saint-Simonian concept of industrialism enabled Carlyle to re-situate a number of Stoic doctrines, particularly those of self-mastery and virtue, into the world of work.

A STOICAL INDUSTRIALISM? SLAVISHNESS, WORK, AND SELF-MASTERY, (1832-1851)

As has been shown earlier in this chapter, the Stoics had recommended that the individual strive to gain mastery over his passions, particularly 'longing' (*epithumia*), 'fear' (*phobos*), 'pleasure' (*hēdonē*), and 'grief' (*lupē*), and to thus render his actions conformable to the laws of the universe. According to the Stoics, to surrender to such passions was irrational, futile, and self-defeating, the characteristic of the slave. These doctrines had informed the young Carlyle's response to Benthamism, which he portrayed as the modern Epicureanism. Even after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle continued to reiterate such ideas. For instance, in an article entitled 'Schiller' (Mar. 1831), he wrote that 'we cannot but remark, as a curious symptom of this time, that the pursuit of merely sensuous good, of personal Pleasure in one shape or other, should be the universally admitted formula of man's whole duty'. While, according to Carlyle, it was no doubt true that 'the herd of mankind have at all times been the slaves of Desire', in the past there had at least been a handful of 'earnest natures' who thought otherwise, so that 'Epicurus had his Zeno'.³⁰⁵ Also remarkable in this regard is Carlyle's memoir of his father, written early the following year (Jan. 1832). As noted in the introduction to this chapter, this memoir has often been cited as proof that it was the personal example of James Carlyle that underpinned his son's understanding of 'manhood' and 'work'.³⁰⁶ However, without wishing to deny the force of this example, it is worth looking at the language which Carlyle used to interpret and articulate it. And, again, this was the language of Stoicism, not of 'Calvinism'. For instance, Carlyle recalled that his father's 'passions

303Journal entry for 22nd Apr. 1832, in *Two Notebooks*, 263.

304*Past and Present* [1843], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1912), 189.

305'Schiller' [1831], *CME* III:90. Zeno was one of the Greek Stoics, referred to above.

306Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle*, 11, 42-45, 51-53; Campbell, 'Carlyle's Religion: The Scottish Background', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, ed. J. Clubbe (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 17; Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 49; Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 96-97; Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, 53.

never mastered him', and that he had ever eschewed 'slavish Fear'.³⁰⁷ Indeed, one year after the composition of this memoir, in 1833, Francis Jeffrey wrote to Carlyle's wife Jane, referring to 'Carlyle's stoical sublimities'.³⁰⁸ The same year, John Stuart Mill wrote to Carlyle recommending the French republican Cavaignac, noting that the latter was 'the intensest of atheists', and that 'his notion of duty is that of a Stoic – he conceives it as something quite infinite, and having nothing whatever to do with happiness'.³⁰⁹ In contrast, Ralph Waldo Emerson, also in 1833, wrote in his diary that 'Carlyle almost grudges the poor peasant his Calvinism'.³¹⁰ Over the subsequent years, a Stoic understanding of freedom as self-mastery (that is, mastery over one's own passions), and as voluntary submission to the laws of nature, continued to colour Carlyle's reception of Saint-Simonian industrialism. For instance, in 'Chartism' (1839), Carlyle wrote that 'he that can work is a born king of something; is in communion with Nature, is a master of a thing or things', while 'he that can work at nothing is but an usurping king, be his trappings what they may; he is the born slave of all things'.³¹¹ The following year, in his lectures on *Hero-Worship* (1840), Carlyle advised his listeners: 'We must get rid of Fear; we cannot act at all till then. A man's acts are slavish, not true but specious; his very thoughts are false, he thinks too as a slave and coward, till he have got Fear under his feet'.³¹² In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle again called for 'Noble just Industrialism',³¹³ writing:

there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work... Work... is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth... Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man.³¹⁴

307'James Carlyle' [Jan. 1832], in *Reminiscences*, ed. C. E. Norton, Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972), 6-7.

308Jeffrey to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 4th / 5th March 1833, in *The Letters of Francis Jeffrey to Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. W. Christie (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 130.

309JSM to TC, 25th Nov. 1833, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part I', ed. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963).

310Emerson, journal entry dated 8th Sep. 1833, in *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes (Boston MA and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909-1914), III: 198-199.

311'Chartism' [1839], *CME* VI: 124.

312*On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 32.

313*Past and Present*, 260.

314*Past and Present*, 189.

In the first draft of this passage, Carlyle had written that this was 'his perennial indestructible certainty, joy, and defence'.³¹⁵ Indeed, as we have seen, Seneca had argued that a soul "lifted above every circumstance" would experience "joy", a "severe matter". Similarly, elsewhere in *Past and Present*, Carlyle declared that

To work; why it is to try [oneself] against Nature, and her everlasting unerring Laws; these will tell a true verdict as to the man. So much of virtue and of faculty did *we* find in him; so much and no more! He had such capacity of harmonising himself with *me* and my unalterable ever-veracious Laws; of co-operating and working *as I* bade him; - and has prospered, as you see! - working as great Nature bade him: does not that mean virtue of a kind; nay of all kinds?³¹⁶

Five years later, in 1848, Carlyle defined the 'slave' as a 'gluttonous greedy-minded cowardly person',³¹⁷ and, in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), he contrasted the 'slave', whose behaviour was defined by 'folly, knavery, falsity, gluttonous imbecility, lowmindedness and cowardice', with the 'free man who is *loyal* to the Laws of this Universe', 'he that will go gladly to his labour and his suffering'.³¹⁸ Finally, the following year, Carlyle wrote, in the *Life of Sterling* (1851), referring to Sterling's final illness:

For courage, for active audacity we had all known Sterling; but such a fund of mild stoicism, of devout patience and heroic composure, we did not hitherto know in him. His suffering, his sorrows, all his unutterabilities... he held right manfully down; marched loyally, as the bidding of the Eternal, into the dread Kingdoms, and no voice of weakness was heard from him.³¹⁹

315The draft MS is printed in Grace J. Calder, *The Writing of Past and Present: A Study of Carlyle's Manuscripts* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1949), 128.

316*Past and Present*, 152-153.

317'Ireland and the British Chief Governor', [13th May 1848], reprinted in *Rescued Essays of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Newberry (London: The Leadenhall Press, 1892), 81-82.

318'Parliaments' [June 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter*, Copyright edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1897), 217-218. A useful clarification of this classical understanding of slavishness was provided by John Ruskin. As Ruskin pointed out, 'slavery' was not a 'political institution', but rather 'an inherent, natural, and eternal inheritance of a large portion of the human race - to whom the more you give of their own will, the more slaves they will make themselves'. Ruskin then added: 'all I would say [has] been said (already in vain) by Carlyle, in the first of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets" ('Essays on Political Economy', in *Unto This Last and Other Essays on Political Economy* [London: J. M. Dent / New York: E. P. Dutton, 1907], 285-286).

319*The Life of John Sterling* [1851], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 268.

Thus, for Carlyle, as for the Stoics, individual liberty consisted not in being left alone by other people, but rather in gaining mastery over one's own passions, and in choosing to act in conformity with the laws of the universe. However, unlike the Stoics, Carlyle now argued that this was to be achieved primarily through work. Moreover, this definition of liberty as self-mastery was also remarkably similar to that which had been given by the Saint-Simonians, that is, '*loving and desiring that which one must do*'.³²⁰

'A LIFE OF ANTIQUE DEVOUTNESS FOR THE MOST MODERN MAN': INDUSTRIALISM AS A SOCIAL ETHOS (1832-1851)

As several scholars have noted, there was a certain tension in Stoic philosophy between, on the one hand, a tendency to maintain the integrity of the self by withdrawal from the outside world, and, on the other, a willingness to participate in civic affairs. On the one hand, civic life could easily be classified as an 'indifferent', and thus overcome.³²¹ On the other hand, as the Romans appreciated, it was equally possible to accommodate the principles of Stoicism to ideals of heroic struggle, patriotism, and self-sacrifice.³²² Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle came to the latter decision. As noted above, Saint-Simonian industrialism freed the principle of 'utility' from the egotistic presuppositions of earlier thinkers, harnessing it instead to a philanthropic moral. In particular, the Saint-Simonians brought the idea of a 'New Christianity' to the fore, emphasising that work ought to be undertaken for the benefit of the 'greatest possible number'. As had been the case with the French writers discussed above, the concept of industrialism thus enabled Carlyle to re-situate classical (in his case, Stoic) notions of 'Virtue' into the world of work. In the process, Carlyle was able to overcome the restrictive economic assumptions of the English republican tradition, while also incorporating the new possibilities offered by modern commerce and the division of labour.³²³ For instance, in 'Goethe's Works' (Aug. 1832), Carlyle wrote that Goethe, 'as thinker, as

320 *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année*, 10-11.

321 J. H. M. Salmon, 'Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50:2 (Apr.-June 1989), 199-225 (207-209, 214).

322 A. A. Long, 'Pleasure and Utility: The Virtues of Being Epicurean', 180-182. As Iain McDaniel points out, Adam Ferguson's 'Stoicism had none of the stress on detachment – *apatheia* or *ataraxia* – which characterized some rival versions of Stoicism'. In contrast, Ferguson stressed that virtue consisted in active engagement in public life (McDaniel, *Adam Ferguson*, 77-78).

323 As J. G. A. Pocock has pointed out, in eighteenth-century Britain, republican discourse assumed landed property to be the guarantee of a man's independence, and thus his ability to participate freely in public life. In this sense, it presupposed a relatively homogeneous citizenry. In opposition, a rival discourse of 'commercial society' held that the division of labour and the development of trade opened up new possibilities for production and consumption, the softening and polishing of the passions, and new forms of sympathy and sociability. Thus, it more than compensated for the loss of a narrow and restrictive 'virtue' (Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, ch. 3, esp. p. 48-49, and 147). For some similar remarks on German thought, see, Douglas Moggach, 'Schiller's Aesthetic Republicanism', in *History of Political Thought*, vol. XXVII, no. 3 (2007), 520-541.

singer, as worker', had 'lived a life of antique nobleness under these new conditions', being 'an antique worthy, yet with the expansion and increased endowment of a modern'.³²⁴ In the same article, he also wrote of:

Antique nobleness in all kinds, yet worn with new clearness; the spirit of it is preserved and again revealed in shape, when the former shape and vesture and become old (as vestures do), and was dead and cast forth; and we mourned as if the spirit too were gone.³²⁵

A similar vision was in evidence in another article of this period, 'Corn-Law Rhymes' (July 1832). Here, Carlyle reviewed the writings and poetry of Ebenezer Elliott, the eponymous 'Corn-Law Rhymer'. As Marcus Waithe has recently pointed out, Carlyle insisted upon transforming his subject into a 'labourer', worker-poet and 'burly Titan', whereas, in reality, Elliott was a successful steel manufacturer, physically diminutive, of a somewhat nervous disposition, and demonstrating a marked penchant for botany.³²⁶ According to Waithe, this transformation was motivated by Carlyle's anxieties regarding his own 'dilettante' profession. By associating literature and poetry with hard, manful 'labour', Waithe argues, Carlyle sought to assuage his own feelings of insecurity.³²⁷ However, another possible explanation is that Carlyle was using Elliott and his writings as an opportunity to work out a response to Saint-Simonian industrialism. In the article, Carlyle wrote of Elliott as 'a voice coming from the deep Cyclopean forges, where Labour, in real soot and sweat, beats with his thousand hammers'.³²⁸ Then, some pages later, Carlyle made the same point as in 'Goethe's Works', writing:

In this Corn-Law Rhymer we seem to trace something of the antique spirit; a spirit which had long become invisible among our working as among other classes; which here, perhaps almost for the first time, reveals itself in an altogether modern political vesture.³²⁹

In subsequent writings, Carlyle frequently reiterated this idea. For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), he turned Aristotle's *zoon politikon* on his head, arguing that 'Man' was 'a Tool-Using

³²⁴'Goethe's Works' [Aug.1832], *CME* IV, 181.

³²⁵'Goethe's Works', 175.

³²⁶Waithe, 'The Pen and the Hammer: Thomas Carlyle, Ebenezer Elliott, and the "active poet"', in *Class and the Canon: Constructing Labouring-Class Poetry and Politics, 1780-1900*, ed. Kirstie Blair and Mina Gorji (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 116-135 (127-128).

³²⁷*Ibid.*, 117-124, 130.

³²⁸'Corn-Law Rhymes' [1832], *CME* IV:186.

³²⁹'Corn-Law Rhymes', 205.

Animal'.³³⁰ In other words, whereas for Aristotle, participation in the life of the *polis* had provided one possible setting for virtue and human flourishing, Carlyle believed that, in the modern world, this had been supplanted by participation in work. As he put it in *Past and Present* (1843), through labour, a 'Life of Antique devoutness, Antique veracity and heroism', had 'again become possible' for 'the most modern man'.³³¹ Moreover, as Carlyle made clear in *Past and Present*, if work was a form of 'heroism', then 'every man' was 'a potential hero'.³³² Indeed, reviewers of *Past and Present* did not fail to draw attention to these classical allusions. For instance, one anonymous pamphleteer explained that, in Carlyle's scheme of things, any 'man or agent who absents himself from this conclave of workers defeats the end of his existence', becoming, like the 'drunken Helot' to 'the Athenian youth', an example of 'how lost and degraded humanity might become', the 'deformity of vice' serving to illustrate 'the dignity of virtue'.³³³ And, in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, a reviewer wrote: 'Let the working man hear that, and amid his sooty toil rejoice. He is the only hero, in Mr. Carlyle's estimation – the only noble'.³³⁴

For Carlyle, as for the Romans, such ideals of 'devoutness', 'heroism', and 'nobleness' implied a willingness to brave pain and suffering for the good of others. In making this point, Carlyle pursued his earlier polemics against Epicureanism and utilitarianism, while also making a number of other classical allusions. For instance, in his *Lectures on the History of Literature* (1838), Carlyle informed his audience that a 'man who could be virtuous must not expect to find happiness there', 'virtue' being, 'too often, allied to physical suffering'.³³⁵ Similarly, in 'Chartism' (1839), he explained: 'All men submit to toil, to disappointment, to unhappiness; it is their lot here'.³³⁶ The following year, Carlyle further clarified this theme in the course of his correspondence with Geraldine Jewsbury, a friend of his wife. In response to Jewsbury's request for moral guidance, Carlyle explained that

“The beginning of true life is *Renunciation*.” One must learn to understand that his own poor individual love of ease, satisfaction, pleasure, what we call our “happiness” (for this world or for the other world) has nothing to do with the matter; one must learn to give up that altogether.³³⁷

³³⁰*Sartor Resartus*, 32-33.

³³¹*Past and Present*, 228.

³³²*Past and Present*, 196-197. See also TC to William Allingham, 4th Sep. 1850, *CL* 25:194.

³³³R. B. E., *Thoughts on Thomas Carlyle; or, a commentary on the “Past and Present”* (London: T. Ward & Co., 1843), 16-17.

³³⁴'Thomas Carlyle's Past and Present', in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (June 1843), 341-348 (347).

³³⁵*Lectures on the History of Literature*, 194. See also 203.

³³⁶'Chartism', 133-134.

³³⁷TC to Geraldine E. Jewsbury, 12th Apr. 1840, *CL* 12:106-107.

In his next letter, Carlyle informed Jewsbury that 'one's own poor *egoism*, hungry love of happiness &c, is the only thing one has to fear'.³³⁸ He then reiterated that "Self-renunciation" was 'the beginning of virtue for a man', and that 'the truly great soul is superior to pain', adding: 'Ethnic, Roman, that; but great, and with a truth in it'.³³⁹ Indeed, for Carlyle, self-renunciation and submission to pain were inextricably bound up with classical notions of virtue and dedication to the common good. As he famously remarked in *Past and Present*: 'In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, did nobleness ever lie'.³⁴⁰ Similarly, elsewhere in *Past and Present*, Carlyle rejected Bentham's 'Greatest Happiness Principle' in favour of what he called the 'Greatest Nobleness Principle'.³⁴¹ In other writings, Carlyle suggested that suffering was simply the price of producing something that would answer to its purpose, and be of use to others. For instance, in 'Sir Walter Scott' (1838), Carlyle remarked that any piece of work, whether in manufacture or in literature, 'will be worthy in direct proportion to the pains bestowed upon it; and worthless always, or nearly so, with no pains'.³⁴² Two years later, in his lectures *On Heroes* (1840), he asked: 'Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain?'.³⁴³ In this sense, as one reviewer put it, the 'best influence' of Carlyle had consisted in 'producing a certain moral tone of thought, of a stern, manly, energetic, self-denying character'.³⁴⁴

However, it is important to appreciate that, for Carlyle, such emphasis on 'self-denial' co-existed with a corresponding emphasis on 'self-development', particularly through work. Indeed, this tension in Carlyle's writings has been remarked upon by several scholars, and, as we shall see, was also perceived by his contemporaries.³⁴⁵ For instance, in 1847, Giuseppe Mazzini explained how

338TC to Geraldine E. Jewsbury, 26th Apr. 1840, *CL* 12:118.

339TC to Geraldine E. Jewsbury, 15th June 1840, *CL* 12:163-166. See also TC to Geraldine E. Jewsbury, 16th July 1840, *CL* 12: 199-200.

340*Past and Present*, 173. See also TC to Henrietta Maria Stanley, 31st May 1842, *CL* 14:195, and Jane Welsh Carlyle to Helen Welsh, 1st Dec. 1843, *CL* 17:194-195.

341*Past and Present*, 148-150.

342'Sir Walter Scott' [1838], *CME* VI:74.

343*On Heroes*, 92.

344'Past and Present, by Carlyle', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 54 (July 1843), 121-138 (121-123). See also 'Chartism, by Thomas Carlyle', in *The British and Foreign Review*, 12 (1840), 303-335 (306), where the reviewer compared Carlyle to the German historian Niebuhr, for whom 'Regeneration seemed only possible through some renewal of ancient zeal and patriotism, such as that which he saw in Germany in the glorious war of freedom'.

345For instance, George Levine, in his study of *Sartor Resartus*, noted 'a real, even conscious tension between self-will and self-denial' (Levine, *The Boundaries of Fiction: Carlyle, Macaulay, Newman* [Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968], 31), while Albert LaValley suggested that Carlyle advocated 'a new society that incorporates industrial progress and rescues labour by turning it into a source of individual self-fulfilment' (LaValley, *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern* [New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1968], 189). Here, I seek to further develop these points, and to substantiate them through reference to the contemporary context.

Carlyle differed from Charles Fourier, an early French socialist and proponent of 'attractive industry'. With Fourier, Mazzini wrote,

happiness was the end of human life – *pain*, a sign of error – *pleasure*, satisfaction, a sign of truth... [In contrast,] we desire that man may be enabled to develop himself in the plenitude of all his faculties, moral, intellectual, and *physical*; but we know that it can only be by placing before him, for his object, as Carlyle says, not the *highest happiness*, but the *highest nobleness possible*, by elevating in him the idea of the dignity and of the mission of humanity, by rekindling in him, by faith and the example of devotion, the expiring flame of self-sacrifice... that we can approach more nearly to that condition.³⁴⁶

As Mazzini made clear, Carlyle's advocacy of 'self-sacrifice' referred primarily to one's own selfish love of ease and pleasure, implying a corresponding ideal of self-development, 'moral, intellectual, and *physical*', through work, for the good of others. This two-sided ideal was well-captured by John Stuart Mill in a letter written to Carlyle early in 1834. Mill wrote:

Though I hold the good of the species... to be the *ultimate* end, (which is the alpha omega of my utilitarianism) I believe with the fullest Belief that this end can in no other way be forwarded but by the means you [Carlyle] speak of, namely by each taking for his exclusive aim the development of what is best in *himself*... by discovering in what manner such faculties as he possesses or can acquire may produce most good in the world.³⁴⁷

Thus, as both Mazzini and Mill recognised, Carlyle considered self-development to be as much a duty as self-sacrifice. Moreover, while the individual could not expect to find 'happiness' in such a life, he would come to experience a feeling of 'nobility', similar to which the Stoics had meant by joy. Such a 'free man', wrote Carlyle, 'will go gladly to his labour and his suffering', walking 'through the roaring tumults, invincibly the way whither he is bound'.³⁴⁸

346 Joseph Mazzini, 'Thoughts Upon Democracy in Europe', in *The People's Journal*, Vol. III, no. 58 (6th Feb. 1847), 79-81.

347 JSM to TC, 12th Jan. 1834, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII.

348 'Parliaments' [June 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 218.

'THE PRIDE OF HUMAN PHILOSOPHY': CARLYLE AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE PERIODICAL PRESS (1840-1856)

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, it has long been a tradition amongst historians to attribute many of Carlyle's ideas to his Calvinist upbringing, and to portray the man himself, to use C. F. Harrold's memorable phrase, as 'a Calvinist shorn of his theology'.³⁴⁹ In contrast, the previous section has suggested that the key to Carlyle's doctrine of work would perhaps be better sought not in Calvinism, but rather in classical Stoicism. Indeed, in one of the few references that Carlyle made to Calvinism during years, he conflated the latter with Stoicism, writing to John Gibson Lockhart in 1842: 'Really the Scotch are a meritorious people... They say, with their rigorous stoicism, and Calvinism which is Hyper-Stoicism: suffer, abstain; thou art there to abstain and endure!'³⁵⁰. Again, this suggests that it was primarily through the language of stoicism that Carlyle made sense of his own experience. What seems to have lead historians astray is the fact that Carlyle made frequent use of Biblical and Christian language. However, it seems to me that in doing so, Carlyle was simply employing the tactics of any successful orator, appealing to *loci communes*, relating his views to popular opinion, and playing on the assumptions and prejudices of his audience.³⁵¹ In this regard, Carlyle thus fulfils Stefan Collini's definition of the 'public moralist', inciting his contemporaries to live up to their professed ideals, and adapting his idiom and strategy of argument to fit his audience.³⁵² In other words, Carlyle was promoting a secular project, which he articulated using a pseudo-Christian rhetoric, designed to resonate with an (ostensibly) Christian public.³⁵³ Indeed, contemporary Christian reviewers were entirely aware of what Carlyle was doing. As one contributor to the *Congregational Magazine* put it in 1842, Carlyle quoted 'Scripture phrases with much significance', and 'Bible language' was obviously 'familiar to him'. In this sense, 'no man ever had more or better for *effect*'.³⁵⁴ The following year, William Thomson, writing in the *Christian Remembrancer*, deplored Carlyle's duplicitous use of Christian language, pointing out that this served to lure the faithful into accepting fundamentally anti-Christian ideas. As Thomson put it:

Give us an avowed opponent, and we know how to meet him: but what shall we say to one

349Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought*, 7, 216-224, 237.

350TC to John Gibson Lockhart, 5th Apr. 1842, *CL* 14:122-123 Moreover, it is significant that Carlyle cited the maxim of Epictetus ('abstain and endure'), rather than the words of Calvin.

351See Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 117.

352See Collini, *Public Moralists*, 2-5, 65.

353For an example of Carlyle's adept use of biblical language, see John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1953), 23-26.

354'On the Religious of Thomas Carlyle', in *The Congregational Magazine*, 6 (Dec. 1842), 801-820 (818-820).

who uses our watchwords to enter and fire our temples; who comes among us to preach the word of devils, arrayed in the cope and stole?³⁵⁵

In 1845, another reviewer claimed to be not 'at all edified' by Carlyle's 'frequent mode of using Scripture language', but 'pained, rather, and sometimes shocked'.³⁵⁶ Similarly, in 1852, a contributor to the *North British Review* wrote that 'so truly Christian-wise does he often speak, that when we class him, as we have done, at the head of the antichristian section of our Literature, our heart almost misgives us'.³⁵⁷ However, such reviewers were obliged to admit that Carlyle's rhetorical ploys had been highly effective, winning the trust of a Christian public, and drawing a veil over those of his opinions that, if stated plainly, would have been obnoxious to the latter. Particularly interesting in this regard is a review of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* by George Gilfillan, a presbyterian minister, which appeared in the *Eclectic Review* in 1851. Some years previously, Carlyle had mentioned Gilfillan in a letter to Emerson, referring to him as a 'dissenting Minister in Dundee', 'whose position as a Preacher of bare old Calvinism under penalty of death, sometimes makes me tremble for him'. Carlyle then added: 'as I said, his being a Calvinist Dissenting Minister... forces me to be very reserved to him'.³⁵⁸ In his review of Carlyle, Gilfillan angrily exclaimed:

We have heard [Carlyle] claimed by intelligent ministers of the Free Church of Scotland as a Christian, nay, a Puritan. Others, not quite so far astray, look upon his religious opinions as uncertain, vague, indefinite, perhaps not yet fully formed. This is the fault of his mystic and tantalizing mode of expression. Not every eye can pierce through the fantastic veil he wears, and see behind it the features of a mere nature and duty-worshipper.³⁵⁹

Given the claims about Stoicism made above, the phrase 'mere nature and duty-worshipper' is significant.

355 William Thomson, review of *On Heroes*, in the *Christian Remembrancer*, VI (Aug. 1843), 138-140.

356 'The Works of Thomas Carlyle', in *The Eclectic Review*, XVII (Apr. 1845), 377-399 (394-395).

357 'Carlyle's Life of Sterling', in *North British Review*, 16 (Feb. 1852), 359-389 (369).

358 TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 31st Jan. 1844, *CL* 17:254-256.

359 [George Gilfillan], 'Carlyle's Life of Sterling', in *The Eclectic Review*, 2 (Dec. 1851), 717-729 (721). Reprinted in Gilfillan, *A Third Gallery of Literary Portraits* (New York: Sheldon, Lamport, and Blakeman, 1855), 267-284 (272). Shortly before the appearance of his review, Gilfillan had written to a correspondent: 'What a pity Carlyle threw in amid the genialities of his life of Sterling, those few rabid sentences of infidelity. He is getting, very properly, as you will see, scourged for them everywhere. The *Eclectic* comes out next month to the same tune' (Gilfillan to Thomas Aird, 24th Nov. 1851, in Gilfillan, *Letters and Journals, with Memoir*, ed. R. A. Watson and E. A. Watson [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892], 195). Having read the review, Carlyle wrote to his sister: 'Gifted Gilfillan... is very crabbed upon me about the *Life of Sterling*. He is, upon the whole, a considerable of an ass' (TC to Jean Carlyle Aitken, 20th Dec. 1851, *CL* 26:272-273).

At this point, it will be necessary to set out a rough, but hopefully working, distinction between Stoicism and Calvinism. Of course, this distinction might seem simplistic, and, as Christopher Brooke rightly cautions us, Stoicism and Christianity need not be mutually exclusive.³⁶⁰ However, the distinction was one made by contemporaries in their responses to Carlyle, and will thus hopefully be borne out in the course of the following section. At first sight, Stoicism shows certain similarities with Calvinism. Whereas the Stoics believed in 'fate', Calvinists believed in 'predestination'. Moreover, both Stoics and Calvinists believed in neglecting the world of the senses.³⁶¹ However, there was a crucial difference. Given the Stoics' strong sense of the inexorability or necessity of fate, there was little point in human beings imploring divine aid or intervention. As Seneca wrote, quoting Virgil, "So give up hoping that your prayers can bring // Some change in the decisions of the Gods".³⁶² For the Stoics, man was thus on his own, and would have to save himself by learning to live virtuously or rationally, in conformity with the laws of fate. Thus, as Edward F. Meylan pointed out some time ago, in the Stoic case, consciousness of man's dependence on fate led paradoxically to consciousness of man's inherent greatness.³⁶³ In contrast, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination brought about a feeling of hopelessness, the only remedy for which was faith in God through Jesus Christ. Indeed, as Meylan noted, the 'conceit of the Stoics' was 'especially the butt of Calvin's criticism'.³⁶⁴ From the Calvinist point of view, and, indeed, from the Christian point of view more generally, the Stoic doctrine that man could free himself from passions and disturbances by an act of will could seem like a denial of sin.³⁶⁵ In sum, to use J. H. M. Salmon's words, there was a fundamental 'anomaly' between, on the one hand, the Stoics' 'use of reason and will to subdue the passions and shield the self from the external world', and, on the other hand, the 'Christian's dependence upon divine charity'.³⁶⁶ In this regard, the following scene, which took place in 1850, is noteworthy:

Mr. Ruskin drew out Mr. Carlyle's religious opinions and by judicious questions hemmed him into expressing his whole *confession*. He denies the personal existence of a devil—he says that he feels a devil within him but denies that any power can clip the wings of that devil but his own.³⁶⁷

360Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, xv.

361Edward F. Meylan, 'The Stoic Doctrine of Indifferent Things and the Conception of Christian Liberty in Calvin's *Institutio Religionis Christianae*', in *Romanic Review*, 28:2 (1937), 135-145 (136, 144-145)

362Cited in Woelfel, "The Beautiful Necessity", 123-127.

363Meylan, 'The Stoic Doctrine of Indifferent Things', 135-136.

364Ibid., 135-136.

365Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 7-8, 10.

366Salmon, 'Stoicism and Roman Example', 202-204.

367John Welsh to his mother, 6th July 1850, in 'Letters from Jane Welsh Carlyle', ed. Huxley, in *Cornhill Magazine*, 61 (1926), 629-630.

Moreover, the terms of this debate were frequently rehearsed in reviews of Carlyle in the periodical press. Perhaps the most striking example of this was an article that appeared in the *Dublin Review* in September 1850. According to the author, Carlyle stood in the tradition of ancient 'Pantheism', 'the worship of Το Παν, or the Great All'. It was this that lay beneath Carlyle's jargon about 'the "Eternal Harmonies," the "Eternal Melodies," the "congeries of Forces," the "Divine Voices," the "Divine Silences," the "Gods," the "Destinies."' Moreover, such beliefs clearly distinguished Carlyle from Christians, who believed in a personal God, 'an intelligent superintending being, our Creator and Judge'. In this sense, though 'the holy name of God' was 'constantly in his mouth', Carlyle used it 'merely exoterically, to express the same thing that he more frequently conveys by the "divine harmonies," and so forth'. This, claimed the author, was 'the key to all that seems so incongruous in him'.³⁶⁸ As noted in the introduction to this chapter, one recent commentator has described Carlyle as a 'post-Christian'.³⁶⁹ However, the reviewer in question saw things quite differently. 'Pantheism', he argued, was hardly 'a modern speculation; it is the oldest and the widest error that has ever been spread upon the earth; it is, indeed, the essence of all Paganism'. In this sense, Carlyle sought not to transcend Christianity, but rather to return to that 'over which Christianity thus triumphed – the force of pride, ambition, self-sufficiency, and the baseless theories of philosophers'.³⁷⁰ As Christopher Brooke has noted, the classical Christian case against stoicism was made by St. Augustine in his *City of God*. According to Augustine, the characteristic vices of the Stoics were pride, haughtiness, and arrogance, which led them to believe that it was in their power to control their passions, and to live virtuously by an act of will. For Augustine, this was effectively a denial of original sin.³⁷¹ Indeed, to clinch his point, the reviewer explicitly invoked Augustine, counter-posing his teachings to those of Cicero, a Roman Stoic. He wrote:

When St. Augustine, in his nineteenth year, moved by the reading of Cicero's Hortensius, devoted his whole heart and life to the service of wisdom, he had got, as we believe, to the very point where the best of the rationalists would leave us at this day, after abandoning Christianity... Rising into fame and eminence, rich in the love of friends, and holding with them high discourse (such as it needs no effort to conceive) upon the ways of God and man: was not his life, in the eyes of the rationalist, a noble and spiritual one? Alas! he knew it

368'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (188-190). A similar argument was made in the *Congregational Magazine*, 6 (Dec. 1842), 801-820 (818-820), and in a review of 'Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*', in the *Christian Remembrancer*, XXIII (Jan. 1852), 158.

369Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, 4, 18.

370'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (192-198).

371Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 7-8, 10.

himself to be base and miserable. He felt himself girt by a coil of sin, which all his strength was impotent to break. He did not seek “spirituality,” but truth, and his own salvation; and he saw everywhere around him opinion, and theory, and jarring speculation, the pride of the philosophers, the dreams of the Manicheans – Eternal Truth nowhere, or else within the Catholic fold.³⁷²

Indeed, such vituperations against Carlyle's 'philosophic pride' were not confined to Catholic commentators. For instance, in 1846, a contributor to the *North British Review* claimed that Carlyle had 'nothing better' to offer 'than a sort of intellectual pantheism'. According to this reviewer, Carlyle had failed to understand that 'the law' which men 'could not but reverence, they could not obey', and 'that the diviner spirit within them kept up an unequal warfare with the affections and corruptions of the flesh'.³⁷³ Continuing, the author opined:

It really needs no words to show any truly religious man how destructive all these vain philosophizings are to Evangelical reality – to the doctrine of the corruption of our nature – the renewal of the heart by grace – the redemption of our fallen race by the sacrifice for sin, and justification through faith.³⁷⁴

Furthermore, claimed the reviewer, Carlyle's writings were 'replete with the most transparent vanity'.³⁷⁵ Similar arguments were in evidence in a review of Carlyle that appeared in the (staunchly Anglican) *Quarterly Review* in 1840. According to the author, Carlyle's writings made 'no profession of a definite Christianity; and if it were fair to put hints and general sentiments together, and to charge the writer with the conclusions to which they probably will bring his readers, we should be compelled to describe them as a new profession of Pantheism'.³⁷⁶ Moreover, like other reviewers, he accused Carlyle of having effectively denied the reality of sin. While Carlyle was no doubt right to prescribe manly fortitude in the face of suffering,

He has overlooked *moral evil*. It is not pain which causes the Dualism of the universe – which makes Pantheism false... For pain we can bare, acquiesce in, live with, honour, love, draw strength from it, and goodness, and light, and life, and love. *It is sin* – it is the

372'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (192-198).

373'Thomas Carlyle – Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell', in *North British Review*, 4 (Feb. 1846), 505-536 (516-519).

374'Ibid., 521-522.

375'Ibid., 525.

376'Carlyle's Works', in *The Quarterly Review*, 46 (June-Sep. 1840), 446-503 (446).

something within us which *rebels against God* – which we *despise, hate, loath*, would willingly *extirpate*, and which yet defies our efforts, rises vigorous against every attempt to crush it; blinds, misleads, insults, and triumphs over us... This, we entreat Mr. Carlyle to remember, is the problem which Pantheism must solve; and we tell him that with Pantheism he cannot solve it.³⁷⁷

Continuing, the reviewer stressed that Carlyle's incitements to virtue would in themselves come to naught, and that salvation from sin was possible through the grace of God alone:

How will Mr. Carlyle bring the heart and mind of man to conform, by force and effort against will and passions, to *his* standard of reality and 'worship of sorrow?' Even if he could hope to compel to it one single individual, what prospect has he of extending his influence over successive generations, and of preventing the natural evil tendency of man from gradually corrupting his religion... If he thinks that any human power – that the mere will or reason of man can thus triumph over the selfishness of his nature, he is to be met on the common ground which Christianity is called to battle with the pride of human philosophy... all life must come from the Author of life, and... without Him we can do nothing, - least of all resist ourselves.³⁷⁸

In an article published in the *British Quarterly Review* in 1849, it was claimed that Carlyle's beliefs were a reaction against such bleak orthodoxies. As the author put it, some 'men will assert that there can be no good of no kind in human nature apart from Christianity; and the natural reaction against this error is in the assertion that all the good really attainable by man may be attained without the least help from Christianity'. In this sense, 'Christian theologians' had 'themselves to thank for much of the extravagance observable in this respect in Mr. Carlyle'.³⁷⁹ However, while conceding that human nature was perhaps not entirely wicked, the author was not convinced that 'the man who would realize his true destiny will do well to eschew everything recorded as distinctively Christian', and rely instead upon 'his own self-derived conviction as to duty, and in his own self-governed action in conformity with that conviction'. Continuing, he returned, like other reviewers, to the question of sin, while also making an explicit reference to the Stoics:

The world has had [this creed] from the beginning, and, we regret to say, has made but a

³⁷⁷Ibid., 481-482.

³⁷⁸Ibid., 492.

³⁷⁹'Thomas Carlyle', in *The British Quarterly Review*, 10 (1st Aug. 1849), 1-45 (9-16).

sorry use of it... It is a 'credo' that may suffice, in some instances, to mould philosophers into stoics, and the example of such men may have its value. But the herd of human kind have never shown themselves remarkably docile under such teaching. They have found within them other forces than those which prompt men to right-doing... evil counsel whispered to them from that quarter... why the nature which has been so dull or so perverse under all such preaching through the past six thousand years, should become more manageable by such means in the future, Mr. Carlyle may be able to explain; to ourselves, the ground of hope in that direction is not great.³⁸⁰

However, notwithstanding these shortcomings, the author concluded on a conciliatory note, writing that the 'great moral end contemplated' by Carlyle 'deserves our warm commendation', and noting that Carlyle's 'virtue' was 'the virtue of a lofty stoicism'.³⁸¹ The following year, in 1850, a similarly sympathetic assessment of Carlyle appeared in the *Westminster Review*. Here, the author wrote:

Many are those who owe [Carlyle] a life-long debt of gratitude... Those who had turned sick and disgusted from the "sweets of religion" and the "search after happiness" found strength and refreshing, as from a fountain of living water, in the cold stern stoicism of his words.

'The influence he has had on the *manliness* of the age', the reviewer concluded, 'cannot be sufficiently estimated'.³⁸² Two years later, another reviewer, writing in the *North British Review*, made a similar point. In doing so, he referred explicitly to the Epicureanism / Stoicism debate, which, as we have seen, had played a central role in the early writings of Carlyle. The reviewer wrote:

We have pretty well got rid – thanks to [Carlyle] - of the skeptical Epicureanism of last century; but only, so far as he is concerned, to traverse the more lofty and specious but not less dangerous verge of a stoical Pantheism.³⁸³

Similarly, James Martineau, writing in the *National Review* in 1856, praised Carlyle for having refuted the 'searching skepticism of Hume', along with the 'devices of utilitarian *cuisine* for putting pleasure into the pot and drawing virtue out'.³⁸⁴ However, according to Martineau, Carlyle had

380 Ibid., 9-16.

381 Ibid., 42.

382'Religious Faith and Modern Scepticism', in *Westminster Review*, LIII (Jan. 1850), 196-211 (205).

383'Carlyle's Life of Sterling', in *North British Review*, 16 (Feb. 1852), 359-389 (388-389).

384'Personal Influences on our Present Theology: Newman – Coleridge – Carlyle', in *The National Review*, 3 (1856),

nonetheless erred in conflating 'nature and spirit', the 'kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of nature', an error which had lead him to a 'delusive conception of human goodness'. For Martineau, this was a product of 'the *pagan* character of our author's mind; his alienation from the distinctively Christian type of reverence'.³⁸⁵ Thus, contrary to the claims of later commentators, it seems that many contemporaries saw Carlyle not as 'a Calvinist shorn of his theology',³⁸⁶ but rather as a latter-day Stoic.

Finally, it is worth noting another aspect of Carlyle's thought that drew particular fire from Christian reviewers. In *Past and Present*, Carlyle employed a pseudo-Christian rhetoric, declaring that 'older than all preached Gospels' was the 'unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, forever-enduring Gospel', that of '*Laborare est Orare*, Work is Worship'.³⁸⁷ As one anonymous commentator remarked, by Carlyle's standards, Christ's preaching to the woman of Samaria, carrying a pitcher on her way to draw water, were thus not so much mistaken, as simply unnecessary.³⁸⁸ The danger of Carlyle's idea was, as a reviewer in the *British Quarterly Review* remarked, that 'work' would 'supplant worship', and that 'worship in the ordinary and formal sense' would drop wholly out of sight'.³⁸⁹ Such a prospect, however, rather appealed to another group of reviewers, to whom we now turn.

'MEN ARE WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD': THE RECEPTION OF CARLYLE IN *THE REASONER* (1847-1855)

Carlyle's writings met with a far more positive response in the pages of the *Reasoner*, a 'secularist' newspaper edited by George Jacob Holyoake, a former disciple of Robert Owen, who would later play a pioneering role in the co-operative movement. Owen was known for his belief that human character was formed by circumstances, over which man had no control, and could thus neither be praised nor blamed for his actions. However, as Gregory Claeys has shown, following the failure of several Owenite model communities, and particularly of that of Queenwood in 1845, Owen's doctrine of circumstances came to be seen as increasingly untenable. As Claeys puts it,

449-494 (484).

385Ibid., 487-491.

386Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought*, 7, 216-224, 237.

387*Past and Present*, 193-194, 199. This idea had been worked out in TC to James Garth Marshall, 27th Oct. 1841, *CL* 13: 288-289, and TC to Joseph Ormond, 8th Oct. 1842, *CL* 15:121.

388'R. B. E.', *Thoughts on Thomas Carlyle*, 23-24. The reference is to John 4:7-30. From a somewhat different perspective, Friedrich Engels argued that 'work' was 'a purely human matter', and that Carlyle's attempt to link the former to "God" was entirely 'arbitrary' ('The Condition of England: *Past and Present* by Carlyle' [Feb. 1844], in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 [London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975], 465).

389'Thomas Carlyle', in *The British Quarterly Review*, 10 (1st Aug. 1849), 1-45 (32-33).

"‘circumstances’ failed to account for so devastating a failure', and blame had to be apportioned. Moreover, in response to such failures, former Owenites such as Holyoake 'set out to give socialism a more individualist foundation in which the ideas of self-formation and personal responsibility could play a greater role'.³⁹⁰ In doing so, it seems that Holyoake, along with other contributors to the *Reasoner*, drew significantly upon the writings of Carlyle. This was particularly true of Carlyle's panegyrics on the nobility of labour, which seemed to appeal to many of the paper's contributors, perhaps themselves from working-class backgrounds. For instance, in 1847, a contributor signing himself 'Eugene' fulminated at some length against the spirit of 'Snobbery'. According to 'Eugene', the 'snob' was marked by 'egotism' and 'selfishness'. Knowing 'not how to be courteous to his conventional superiors', he was 'servile', and, knowing 'not how to be dignified to his conventional inferiors', he was, at the same time, 'brutal'. Particularly galling to 'Eugene' was the fact that a 'snob despises a man who is only a mechanic; while he worships a lordling who is only a fool'. Continuing, he wrote:

By way of contrast to such men, I read the following from Thomas Carlyle, who has, as yet, written the best things concerning what kind of men should be honoured and what not honoured. "Two men I honour," he writes in 'Sartor Resartus', "and no third. First, the toil-worn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue... Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living manlike... A second man I honour, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of Life... These two, in all their degrees, I honour: all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth."

'Eugene' then advised his readers to 'abjure the vice of Snobbism', and 'carefully cultivate a sense of what is noble and delicate and manly'. Concluding, he wrote:

I long for the day when the toiling artisans of England, in spite of their oppression, casting off meanness and lying, walk the earth true, noble gentlemen... When, true to themselves, they stand upon their simple manliness and worth, scorning to aspire to the mere appearance of excellence, and toiling ceaselessly to possess excellence itself. Then will Snobbishness be

³⁹⁰Gregory Claeys, *Citizens and Saints: Politics and Anti-Politics in Early British Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 261-263.

doomed... Then a man will be valued in proportion to his manhood, whether he work with brawny limb, or powerful intellect.³⁹¹

Thus, it seems that Carlyle's attempts to re-situate the classical virtues in the world of work, with the aid of the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism', met with some approval in the pages of *The Reasoner*. Also of particular interest in this regard is an article by Holyoake himself, entitled 'The Logic of Death' (1850). Here, Holyoake began by recounting the travails of his early life, and describing the solace he had derived from one of Carlyle's early articles, 'Biography' (1832). He wrote:

In the dark shade of this old society my lot was cast, and there I have struggled for more light for myself and brethren. For many years, I toiled, with thousands of others, who were never remunerated by the means of paltriest comfort, and whose lives were never enlivened by pleasure... Since then my days have been chequered and uncertain, but they have never been criminal, nor servile, nor sad... The right-minded in the lowest station may be rich in the wise sense of Carlyle: - "Sweep away utterly all frothiness and falsehood from your heart; struggle unweariedly to acquire, what is possible for every god-created Man, a free, open, humble soul".

'Thus', continued Holyoake, 'I have endeavoured to see life; and it is from this point of view that I explain my conceptions of death'. Holyoake then quoted Schiller, giving as his source Carlyle's *Life* (1825):

"What went before and what will follow me, I regard as two black impenetrable curtains, which hang down at the two extremities of human life, and which no living man has yet drawn aside... A deep silence reigns behind this curtain; no one once within it will answer those he has left without; all you can hear is a hollow echo of your own question, as if you shouted into a chasm."

Furthermore, Holyoake appended to his article another quotation, this time 'From Seneca': "Learn to die; it is unlearning to be a slave". Having dealt with death, Holyoake returned again to life,

³⁹¹ 'Eugene', 'The 'Snob Papers' in Punch', in *The Reasoner and Utilitarian Record*, ed. G. J. Holyoake, vol. III, no. 61 (1847), 401-406 (401, 404-405). 'Eugene' also employed a number of stock Carlylisms, such as the term 'Flunkey', and defining a 'respectable' man as a man who "kept a gig."

openly declaring that 'I am not a Christian... Nor am I a believer in the Inspiration of the Bible'. He continued:

Man is weak, and a special Providence gives him no strength – distracted, and no counsel – ignorant, and no wisdom – in despair, and no consolation – in distress, and no relief – in darkness, and no light... It is vain to say 'God governs by general laws.' General laws are inevitable fate. General laws are atheistical. They say practically, 'Men are without God in the world – man, look to thyself – weak though thou mayst be, Nature is thy hope.' And even so it is... Help lies not in priests, nor in the prayer... it lies in science, art, courage, and industry.³⁹²

In addition to the direct citations of Carlyle, the stress on self-mastery, voluntary submission to the laws of nature, and 'science, art, courage, and industry' are all standard Carlylian tropes. Thus, it seems that Carlyle's writings provided Holyoake with an appealing alternative to Christianity.

Later the following year, Carlyle published his *Life of Sterling* (1851), which contained all manner of animadversions against Christianity, and the Church of England in particular. For many Christian readers of Carlyle, this was the final straw, one reviewer writing in the *Christian Observer and Advocate* that 'when lying on the bed of death, and about to give in our account to the Great Father and Judge of all men, there are few works we should regret more to have written than Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*'.³⁹³ In contrast, the *Reasoner* rejoiced that 'We have here a verdict in our favour', and claimed Carlyle for the cause of 'the Freethinkers'.³⁹⁴ On the 25th November 1852, Holyoake took part in a meeting in Northampton, chaired by the Chartist leader Ernest Jones, at which Mr. Hamilton 'the editor of the *Aylesbury News*', declared that "We were overrun by what Carlyle had well called a putrescent, dead, damnable cant. We wanted that Christianity would give a Penny Loaf instead of a tract".³⁹⁵ In the following issue of the *Reasoner*, Holyoake returned to the subject, denouncing Christianity as a sham. He wrote:

392G. J. Holyoake, 'The Logic of Death', in *The Reasoner and Theological Register*, vol. VIII, no. 193 (1850), 32-40 (34, 37-38, 40). For the Schiller quote, see Carlyle, *Life of Schiller*, op. cit., 45.

393'Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*', in the *Christian Observer and Advocate*, LII (Apr. 1852), 276.

394W. J. B., 'Sterling's Life, by Thomas Carlyle', in *The Reasoner and Theological Examiner*, vol. XII, no. 288 (1852), 44.

395George Jacob Holyoake, 'Three Nights in Northampton', in *The Reasoner and Theological Examiner*, vol. XII, no. 290 (1852), 65-67 (65).

Around us we see numbers of persons who certainly no longer acquiesce in Christianity, yet use its nomenclature, regarding it as the current coin conventional necessity imposes upon them as a medium of exchange. Christianity is to them an article of commerce. They see that in the market of the world, it fetches money daily – that they who can talk its language get the ear of the multitude, who are credulous; and of the rich, who are politic... the Christian himself sanctions this, as Carlyle has bitterly said, because the Christian fears differences of opinion; but there is one thing which he does not fear which is worse than all – that is, hypocrisy.

By way of alternative, Holyoake then set out the virtues of 'Freethinking'. In contrast to the otherworldliness of Christianity, 'Freethinking' dealt with 'the *secular* sphere', working 'for the welfare of men in this world'. Moreover, according to Holyoake, 'Freethinking' held that 'Morality is deducible from the nature of things, and Duty from the Solidarity of human interests; and concerns itself with Growth and Development, with Science and Art, with Trust and Truth, with Service and Endurance'.³⁹⁶ Finally, a few years later, the *Reasoner* printed a speech by Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Tribune*, which had been recently delivered in Boston and New York. In the speech, Greeley cited a passage from Carlyle's *Past and Present* (already cited above), in which Carlyle 'forcibly says – or sings – of Labour':

“there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work... Work... is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth... Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man”.³⁹⁷

Greeley then asked, 'Can it be wondered, then, that I, a child of many generations of cotters and drudging delvers, should ponder and dream over the elevation of labour to something like the

³⁹⁶George Jacob Holyoake, 'Modern Freethinking: Its Definition, Sphere, and Defence' in *The Reasoner and Theological Examiner*, vol. XII, no. 291 (1852), 81-82. Similarly, an article published a few years later explained that for Carlyle, 'faith' ought to mean 'faith in moral truth and goodness, and a consistent and energetic acting out this principle' (Moral of the Week', in *The Reasoner and London Tribune: A Weekly Secular Newspaper*, ed. G. J. Holyoake, vol. XIX, no. 9 [27th May 1855], 71).

³⁹⁷*Past and Present*, 189.

dignity and esteem which its merits and its utility demand?’³⁹⁸ In sum, while the Christian reviewers discussed above might have objected to Carlyle's 'paganism' and 'philosophic pride', the writers of the *Reasoner* seem to have rather appreciated them. In the *Reasoner*, Carlyle's stoic-inflected emphasis on the virtues of labour, self-mastery, voluntary submission to the laws of nature, duty, and heroic self-sacrifice all found an echo.

'ALL WORK IS NOBLE'

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Raymond Williams interpreted Carlyle's use of the term 'industrialism' as a reference to 'a new order of society based on an organizing mechanical production'.³⁹⁹ Moreover, according to Williams, Carlyle was an opponent of this new order, making 'culture' the 'ground of his attack on Industrialism'.⁴⁰⁰ Previous sections have already demonstrated that in fact, Carlyle did not oppose 'Industrialism' as a problem, but rather embraced it as a solution. In this section, it will be argued that by 'Industrialism', Carlyle, like Say, Saint-Simon, and the Saint-Simonians, did not mean factories, but rather all forms of useful, creative labour, broadly understood.⁴⁰¹ Moreover, it will also be suggested that it makes little sense to oppose 'Industrialism' to 'culture', since, for Carlyle, these two were complementary, not contradictory.

Carlyle was well aware of the momentous technological changes occurring at the time, having been greatly impressed during a visit to the 'iron and coal works' of Birmingham in 1824.⁴⁰² However, in 'German Playwrights' (1829), Carlyle suggested that both the intellectual and the manual labourer were to be considered workers, each in his own way. He wrote:

In this stage of society, the playwright is as essential and acknowledged a character as the millwright, or cartwright, or any other wright whatever; neither can we see why, in general estimation, he should rank lower than these his brother artisans.⁴⁰³

Several years later, Carlyle re-iterated this idea in *Sartor Resartus*, writing, in a passage already cited above:

398Horace Greeley, 'Slavery and Labour: A Lecture, Delivered at Boston and New York, Jan. 1855', in *The Reasoner and London Tribune: A Weekly Secular Newspaper*, ed. G. J. Holyoake, vol. XIX, no. 24 (9th Sep. 1855), 187.

399Williams, *Keywords*, 166-167.

400Williams, *Culture and Society*, 13-14, 95-97.

401This point has recently been made by Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 65, 106.

402On the visit to Birmingham, see TC to Alexander Carlyle, 11th Aug. 1824, *CL* 3:124-127.

403'German Playwrights' [1829], *CME* II:85.

Two men I honour, and no third. First, the toil worn craftsman that with earth-made implement laboriously conquers the earth and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand; crooked, coarse, wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indefeasible royal, as of the sceptre of this planet. A second man I honour, and still more highly. Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable – not daily bread, but the bread of life... These two, in all their degrees, I honour: all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.⁴⁰⁴

Similarly, in the *French Revolution* (1837), Carlyle wrote regarding Paris: 'Labour's thousand hammers ring on her anvils: also a more miraculous Labour works, noiselessly, not with the Hand but with the Thought'.⁴⁰⁵ Furthermore, for Carlyle, the term 'Industry' could also refer to manual labour. For example, in his lectures *On Heroes* (1840), Carlyle described Thor as 'the god of Peaceable Industry', explaining that the latter 'engages in all manner of rough manual work, scorns no business for its plebianism'.⁴⁰⁶ Carlyle thus certainly did not understand 'Industry' to mean factory production. Indeed, this would hardly have made sense given his idealistic conception of work (here, enduring debts to Fichte were discernible). As Carlyle remarked elsewhere in the same lectures:

All that [man] does, and brings to pass, is the vesture of a Thought. This London city... what is it but a Thought, but millions of Thoughts, made into One... embodied in brick, in iron, smoke, dust, Palaces, Parliaments, Hackney Coaches, Katherine Docks, and the rest of it!

Moreover, according to Carlyle, "bits of paper with traces of black ink", were 'the *purest* embodiment a Thought of man can have'.⁴⁰⁷ In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle again made clear that 'Labour' included not only 'Sweat of the brow', but also 'sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart'. To this extent, it comprised all attempts to subdue 'Chaos' into 'Order', whether the digging out of thistles to make room for 'useful grass', the spinning of cotton into shirts, or the eradication of 'Ignorance, Stupidity, [and] Brute-mindedness'.⁴⁰⁸ However, while 'Industrialism' did not refer specifically to factory production, it did imply a broadly positive attitude towards the latter, all

404 *Sartor Resartus*, 172-173.

405 *The French Revolution* [1837], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1906), I:6-7.

406 *On Heroes*, 36.

407 *On Heroes*, 166.

408 *Past and Present*, 193-194.

'work', 'even cotton-spinning', being 'noble'.⁴⁰⁹ Indeed, Carlyle seems to have demonstrated significant interest in new forms of technology. In his memoirs, Francis Espinasse recalled that Carlyle had, around the time of his visit to Manchester in 1847, borrowed a copy of Edward Baines's *History of the Cotton Manufacture* (1835) from the London Library, making a series of careful 'pencil jottings' in its margins.⁴¹⁰

'STEADY MODEST INDUSTRY': THE LIMITS OF INDUSTRIALISM (1839-1855)

In a recent book, Rob Breton has suggested that Carlyle's 'Gospel of Work' served 'to level working-class interests into the interests of the dominant class', 'effectively' warring 'against working-class consciousness', and validating 'obscene working conditions'.⁴¹¹ However, far from being an uncritical glorification of work as it actually was, Carlyle's writings offered a utopian vision of what it potentially could be. He recognised that, as things stood, most work was motivated by greed and self-interest, bound up with exploitation of workers, and often detrimental, rather than beneficial, to others. As Carlyle remarked in 'Chartism':

Cotton-spinning is the clothing of the naked in its result; the triumph of man over matter in its means. Soot and despair are not the essence of it; they are divisible from it, - at this hour, are they not crying fiercely to be divided?⁴¹²

Again, in *Past and Present*, Carlyle referred to 'Industrial work, still under bondage to Mammon',⁴¹³ and, in the first of his *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), he wrote of

Supply-and-demand, Leave-it-alone, Voluntary-Principle, Time will mend it: - till British industrial existence seems fast becoming one huge poison-swamp of reeking pestilence physical and moral... Slop-shirts attainable halfpence cheaper, by the ruin of living bodies and immortal souls.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹*Past and Present*, 147.

⁴¹⁰Francis Espinasse, *Literary Recollections and Sketches* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 146-151.

⁴¹¹Breton, *Gospels and Grit*, 40-42. See also Herbert Sussman: '[Carlyle] ignores the conditions of work itself; Carlyle is not, for example, at all concerned with child labor' (Sussman, 'Transcendentalism and the Machine', 40).

⁴¹²'Chartism', 165-166. See also TC to John Sterling, 13th May 1841, *CL* 13:131.

⁴¹³*Past and Present*, 199.

⁴¹⁴'The Present Time' [Feb. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 49-51.

There thus seems to be little substance to Breton's charge that Carlyle's ideas validated 'obscene working conditions'.

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle looked forward to a future in which 'noble LABOUR' would 'take his place on the throne of things, - leaving his Mammonism, and several other adjuncts, on the lower steps of said throne'.⁴¹⁵ Having thus bid 'Mammonism' goodbye, 'Labour' would cease its frantic drive to produce and accumulate at all costs, and confine its activities to more reasonable bounds. For Carlyle, as for the Saint-Simonians, central to this would be the improvement of the physical, intellectual and moral condition of the labouring classes. Shortly before the publication of *Past and Present*, Carlyle had written to the secretaries of the Manchester Athenaeum:

To provide the working people with a Place of Reunion, where they might enjoy books, perhaps music, recreation, instruction; and at all events, what is dearest to all men, the society and sight of one another: this is a thing of palpable utility, a thing at once possible and greatly needed... I have regretted much, in looking at your great Manchester, and its thousand-fold industries and conquests, that I could not find, in some quarter of it, a hundred acres of green ground with trees on it, for the summer holidays and evenings of your all-conquering industrious men.⁴¹⁶

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle looked forward to a time when 'Competition, at railway-speed' would 'abate', and 'gambling speculation' would give way to 'steady modest industry'.⁴¹⁷ Moreover, in *Past and Present*, he also called for 'Sanitary Regulations', and for the establishment of parks in large cities:

Every toiling Manchester, its smoke and soot all burnt, ought it not, among so many world-wide conquests, to have a hundred acres or so of free greenfield, with trees on it, conquered, for its little children to disport in; for its all-conquering workers to take a breath of twilight air in? ... to whatsoever 'vested interest,' or such like, stood up, gainsaying merely, "I shall lose profits,"—the willing Legislature would answer, "Yes, but my sons and daughters will gain health, and life, and a soul."⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵*Past and Present*, 163-164.

⁴¹⁶TC to the Hon. Secretaries of the Manchester Athenaeum, 26th Jan. 1843, *CL* 16:33.

⁴¹⁷*Past and Present*, 260.

⁴¹⁸*Past and Present*, 254-255.

The following year, and in a similar vein, Carlyle also endorsed Lord Ashley's proposal to restrict the hours of factory labour.⁴¹⁹ Thus, while Carlyle no doubt considered work the central fact of human existence, he also believed that there was more to life than work. Moreover, while he certainly believed that work meant a 'valiant suffering for others' (*Past and Present*), he also believed that one might reasonably expect to suffer ten hours a day instead of fourteen. To use Ruskin's words, man was no doubt destined to eat his 'bread' by the 'sweat' of his 'brow', but this need not be by the 'breaking' of his 'heart'.⁴²⁰ Indeed, the passages of *Past and Present* dealing with 'steady modest industry' were cited approvingly by Ruskin in his 'Essays on Political Economy' (1862-63), and, a few years later, in *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), Ruskin looked forward to a time when work would 'have its appointed times of rest', and 'working-men' 'good books to read', and 'comfortable fire-sides to sit at'.⁴²¹

Historians have perhaps neglected this side of Carlyle's thought, having taken certain exaggerated remarks made by John Stuart Mill at face value. In an article published in *Fraser's Magazine* in January 1850, Mill labelled Carlyle's 'gospel of work' a 'cant', arguing that there was 'nothing laudable in work for work's sake'. Mill admitted that to 'work voluntarily for a worthy object is laudable', but claimed that Carlyle had never explained 'what constitutes a worthy object'. According to Mill, Carlyle could not have meant by work 'useful exertion', given that he 'always scoffs at the idea of utility'. Mill continued:

In opposition to the "gospel of work," I would assert the gospel of leisure, and maintain that human beings cannot rise to the finer attributes of their nature compatibly with a life filled with labour.⁴²²

Any polemic involves an element of hyperbole and caricature, and this is no exception. Carlyle had never advocated 'work for work's sake', but rather work as a means to individual self-mastery, and work as a binding social ethos. Moreover, Carlyle accepted the principle of 'utility', albeit redefined in a 'social' sense, that is, as the production of useful things for the benefit of others (akin to what

⁴¹⁹TC to Margaret Carlyle, 30th Mar. 1844. *CL* 17:324-325. See also Espinasse, *Literary Recollections and Sketches*, 149.

⁴²⁰Ruskin, 'Pre-Raphaelitism' [1851], in *The Crown of Wild Olive – Munera Pulveris – Pre-Raphaelitism – Aratra Pentelici* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1894), 237.

⁴²¹Ruskin, 'Essays on Political Economy' [1862-63], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays on Political Economy* (London: J. M. Dent / New York: E. P. Dutton, 1907), 302-303; 'The Crown of Wild Olive' [1866], in *The Crown of Wild Olive – Munera Pulveris – Pre-Raphaelitism – Aratra Pentelici*, 35-36. See also 'Aratra Pentelici' [1870], in *ibid.* 411.

⁴²²John Stuart Mill, 'The Negro Question', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XLI (Jan., 1850), 25-31.

the Saint-Simonians had called 'social utility'). Seemingly stung by Mill's accusations, Carlyle sought to clarify his opinions in the course of a conversation that took place early the following month (Feb. 1850). He remarked:

When I go to bed of a night, it matters not whether I have been happy or not during the day; it matters only whether I have done some useful thing. The unhappiness of a man lies around him as so much work to do - so many devils to be subdued, and order and beauty to be created out of it.⁴²³

Furthermore, Mill's attempt to assert the 'gospel of leisure' in opposition to Carlyle's 'gospel of work' was not altogether convincing. As has been shown in the discussion of *Past and Present*, Carlyle had argued in favour of the limitation of working hours, and the extension of leisure opportunities to the working classes. It thus seems that for him, there was no reason why 'work' and 'leisure' should be mutually exclusive.

In the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, which appeared over the course of the following months, Carlyle, perhaps in response to Mill's accusations, again took care to distinguish between different types of 'Industrialism'. While some fulfilled his ideal of labour, others either did not, or even ran contrary to it. Using the characteristic Saint-Simonian term, Carlyle wrote:

The Industrialisms are all of silent nature; and some of them are heroic and eminently human; others, again, we may call unheroic, not eminently human: *beaverish* rather, but still honest; some are even *vulpine*, altogether inhuman and dishonest.⁴²⁴

Similarly, in 1854, Carlyle recalled a visit to Merthyr Tydvil, describing the latter as 'the *Non-plus-ultra* of Industrialism wholly mammonish'.⁴²⁵ In this sense, Carlyle was not uncritically advocating

⁴²³As reported by Joseph Neuberger to his sister, 5th Feb. 1850, in 'Carlyle and Neuberger', ed. Sadler, in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 50 (1884), 284. In *Unto this Last*, Ruskin cited Mill's preface to his *Principles of Political Economy*, adding a caveat of his own: "'To be wealthy," says Mr. Mill, is "to have a large stock of useful articles." I accept this definition. Only let us perfectly understand it' ('Unto This Last' [1860], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays*, 169). For Ruskin, the 'definition of Wealth, expanded, becomes: "The possession of useful articles, which we can use".' (171). When *Unto this Last* appeared in book form in 1862, Carlyle informed Ruskin: 'in every part of [it] I find a high and noble sort of truth, not one doctrine that I can intrinsically dissent from' (TC to John Ruskin, 30th June 1862, *CL* 38:106-107).

⁴²⁴'Stump-Orator' [May 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 168. See also 'Excursion (Futile Enough) to Paris' [Sep.-Oct. 1851], in *The Last Words of Thomas Carlyle* (Boston MA: Dana Estates & Company, 1892), 182, and TC to John A. Carlyle, 7th Oct. 1851, *CL* 26:196.

⁴²⁵TC to James Hutchison Stirling, 18th Jan. 1854, *CL* 29:24.

'Industrialism' for the sake of 'Industrialism', but rather a particular vision of what 'Industrialism' might one day be, that is, 'steady modest industry', undertaken for the good of others.⁴²⁶

CARLYLE, MILL, AND VIRTUE (1863-1865)

In *Utilitarianism* (1863), Mill offered a far more considered and nuanced appreciation of Carlyle, in such a way as to reveal not only their differences, but also their significant areas of agreement.⁴²⁷ In doing so, he also revisited the Stoicism / Epicureanism debate, which, as we have seen, had framed Carlyle's earlier appraisal of Benthamite utilitarianism. Significantly, even some thirty years later, Mill still chose to approach Carlyle in terms of this same debate. In *Utilitarianism*, Mill argued that Carlyle ran the risk of making 'valiant suffering' (*Past and Present*) an end in itself, and of thus losing sight of the possibility, and desirability, of human happiness. Having referred explicitly to 'Mr. Carlyle', Mill wrote:

[there arises a] class of objectors, who say that happiness, in any form, cannot be the rational purpose of human life and action... they say, that men can do *without* happiness; that all noble human beings have felt this, and could not have become noble but by learning the lesson of *Entsagen*, or renunciation; which lesson, thoroughly learnt and submitted to, they affirm to be the beginning and necessary condition of all virtue.⁴²⁸

Mill conceded significant ground to Carlyle, accepting that one ought not to be 'a selfish egotist, devoid of every feeling or care but those which centre in his own miserable individuality'.⁴²⁹ Moreover, Mill also admitted that, if 'by happiness be meant a continuity of highly pleasurable excitement', a 'happy' life was indeed 'impossible'. However, Mill then proceeded to a clarification of the ideas of Epicurus, the antique forebear of Bentham, implying that Carlyle had failed to understand them.⁴³⁰ As Mill pointed out, Epicurus had not advocated a rampant hedonism, but had rather envisaged a more modest kind of 'happiness', consisting in 'an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the

426Albert LaValley was thus quite right to assert that 'Carlyle shows himself eager to halt any criticism of industry as such. Only in its lack of organization is it held at fault' (LaValley, *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern*, 203).

427There is a good discussion of the following passages in Emery Neff, *Carlyle and Mill: An Introduction to Victorian Thought* [1924], 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 373-377.

428'Utilitarianism' [1863], in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, Oxford World's Classics Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 143.

429'Utilitarianism' [1863] in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, 144-145.

430These passages of Mill are thus cited approvingly by A. A. Long, 'Pleasure and Utility: The Virtues of Being Epicurean', 187-189, 193, 198.

passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing'.⁴³¹ According to Mill, such an existence was 'even now the lot of many, during some considerable proportion of their lives', and, through improvements in 'education' and 'social arrangements', might one day be 'attainable by almost all'.⁴³² However, this would depend on continuing social progress, which itself depended upon exactly the kind of renunciation that Carlyle advocated. As Mill admitted:

Though it is only in a very imperfect state of the world's arrangements that any one can best serve the happiness of others by the absolute sacrifice of his own, yet so long as the world is in that imperfect state, I fully acknowledge that the readiness to make such a sacrifice is the highest virtue which can be found in man.⁴³³

Furthermore, like Carlyle, Mill argued that such voluntary sacrifice of one's own 'happiness' for the good of others would be compensated by a feeling of 'nobleness'. He wrote:

a long succession of generations will perish in the breach before the conquest is completed... yet every mind sufficiently intelligent and generous to bear a part, however small and unobtrusive, in the endeavour, will draw a noble enjoyment from the contest itself, which he would not for any bribe in the form of selfish indulgence consent to be without.⁴³⁴

Thus far, Mill largely followed Carlyle. However, he departed from him in attempting to reconcile these ideas with Bentham's 'greatest happiness' principle. According to Mill, while the 'utilitarian morality does recognise in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others', it refused 'to admit that the sacrifice is itself a good'. Any 'sacrifice which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted'. In this sense, for Mill, the 'only self-renunciation' worthy of applause was that which consisted in a 'devotion to the happiness, or to some of the means of happiness, of others'.⁴³⁵ Thus, 'the morality of self-devotion' could be claimed by 'utilitarians' no less than by 'the Stoic or the Transcendentalist' (given the argument made elsewhere in this chapter, Mill's use of the term 'Stoic' is significant).⁴³⁶ Concluding

431'Utilitarianism', 144.

432'Utilitarianism', 144.

433'Utilitarianism', 147-148.

434'Utilitarianism', 146.

435'Utilitarianism', 147-148.

436'Utilitarianism', 147-148.

the discussion, Mill stated that the 'multiplication of happiness' was thus, 'according to the utilitarian ethics, the object of virtue'.⁴³⁷

This was an astute assessment of Carlyle, one which brought out an important tension in his thought. If one was to 'suffer for others', did this not imply seeking to make others 'happy'? Mill thought so. However, Carlyle was not convinced. In a manuscript dated October 1865, he sketched out a response to Mill. While its title suggests that it referred primarily to another work by Mill, *On Liberty* (1859), the content seems to relate more to the passages from *Utilitarianism* cited above. Carlyle did not see the point in Mill's attempt to stretch the language of happiness so far as to accommodate virtue and 'nobility', believing, firstly, that it would be misinterpreted, and, secondly, that it would be as well to simply speak of virtue and 'nobility' *tout court*. As he put it:

The greatest happiness of the greatest number, or any happiness of any number or of any individual, myself included; that is not the question, nor ever was. Give up that, I pray you: you don't know to what bad issues it will lead you. Say the greatest nobleness of the greatest number, if you must say something.⁴³⁸

The salient point, however, is that the differences between Carlyle and Mill have perhaps been exaggerated. In *Utilitarianism*, Mill made clear that he too, like Carlyle, recognised the importance of virtue, self-renunciation, and self-sacrifice. However, unlike Carlyle, Mill made clear that these ought to be valued solely as a means to an end (i.e. the happiness of others), rather than as ends in themselves.

CARLYLE'S FINAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

In the above passages of *Utilitarianism*, Mill, responding to Carlyle, had referred to Epicureanism and to Stoicism, implying that the debate between the two philosophies was central to Carlyle's thought. As this section will suggest, Stoical ideals of self-mastery continued to play an important role in Carlyle's later (and often neglected) writings. In the early volumes of *Frederick the Great* (1858), Carlyle portrayed the young Frederick as a dissolute adolescent, likening him to 'a rhinoceros', 'wallowing' in 'the mud bath'. According to Carlyle, Frederick had 'got into a disastrous course', consorting 'chiefly with debauched young fellows', who 'lead him on ways not pleasant to

⁴³⁷'Utilitarianism', 150. See also 171-172, and Mill, *Auguste Comte and Positivism* [1865] (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), 141-146.

⁴³⁸'A New (Old) Review of Mill's *Liberty*' [18th Oct. 1865], ed. Trela, in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 6 (1985), 24-25.

his Father [King Friedrich Wilhelm], nor conformable to the Laws of the Universe'.⁴³⁹ As one reviewer remarked in relation to this passage, the need for 'victory over sensualism and animalism', was 'kept before the reader by Carlyle as of the highest type of heroism'. Continuing, the reviewer further explained that Carlyle demands, 'as the grand and indispensable condition to conquest of other men, the obtaining a manful and heroic conquest over self'.⁴⁴⁰ It is worth dwelling on this matter somewhat in relation to the 'Calvinism question', as set out in the introduction to this chapter. Of course, both a Stoic and a Calvinist would agree that a man ought not to wallow in selfish, sensual pleasure, like a rhinoceros in a mud bath. However, the reviewer's phrase, 'manful and heroic conquest over self', seems to suggest that the man is to obtain mastery over himself by an act of will, on the Stoic model, rather than through divine intervention, as on the Calvinist. Moreover, in these early volumes of *Frederick*, Carlyle made several positive references to stoicism. For instance, the mature Frederick was not, 'by all appearance, what is called happy'. To the contrary, his face bore 'evidence of many sorrows', 'of much hard labour done in this world', evincing a quiet 'stoicism, capable enough of what joy there were, but not expecting any worth mention'.⁴⁴¹ Moreover, Carlyle also praised the Prussian military for drilling into its troops a sense of 'practical Stoicism and Spartanism', explaining that 'fixed rigour of method, sobriety, frugality, these are virtues worth acquiring'.⁴⁴² In contrast, the one significant reference to Calvinism that occurs in these volumes is dismissive, verging on the derogatory. Carlyle described the catechism used in Friedrich's education as

A very abstruse Piece; orthodox Lutheran-Calvinist, all proved from Scripture... there is no "religion" to be had for a little Fritz out of all that. Endless Doubt will be provided for him out of all that, probably disbelief of all that... It is indeed amazing what quantities and kinds of extinct ideas apply for belief, sometimes in a menacing manner, to the poor mind of man, and poor mind of child, in these days.⁴⁴³

One is tempted to read the phrase 'poor mind of a child' as a reference to Carlyle's own Calvinist upbringing.

⁴³⁹*History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* [1858-1865]. Copyright edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), II:154.

⁴⁴⁰'The Third Volume of Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*', in *The Eclectic Review*, 2 (1862), 499-523 (517).

⁴⁴¹*Frederick the Great*, I:2.

⁴⁴² *Frederick the Great*, II:95-97.

⁴⁴³*Frederick the Great*, II:44-45.

In the final volumes of *Frederick* (1865), Carlyle again touched upon the theme of Stoicism, citing a letter written by Frederick to his friend and minister D'Argens at the time of the Battle of Torgau. Here, Frederick wrote:

“You [D'Argens], as a follower of Epicurus, put a value on life; as for me, I regard death from the Stoic point of view. Never shall I see the moment that forces me to make a disadvantageous Peace; no persuasion, no eloquence, shall ever induce me to sign my dishonor. Either I will bury myself under the ruins of my Country, or if that *consolation appears too sweet to the Destiny that persecutes me, I shall know how to put an end to my misfortunes when it is impossible to bear them any longer*. I have acted, and continued to act, according to that interior voice of conscience and of honour which directs all my steps: my conduct shall be, in every time, conformable to those principles”.⁴⁴⁴

As we have seen, these doctrines regarding death, the inexorability of fate, and the permissibility of suicide were those of Seneca. Drawing attention to the above epistle, one reviewer of Carlyle's final volume fancied that 'not the king, nor the statesman, nor even the warrior has so much fascinated Mr. Carlyle', but rather the 'grand simplicity of stoicism' that was in him. In the opinion of the reviewer, Frederick probably did not really believe what he wrote, but 'Mr. Carlyle, of course, believes in the high, substantial heroism of his hero'. Moreover, remarked the reviewer, Frederick's stoicism aside, 'of religion, he had not the remotest approach to a possible or a shred of a fig-leaf to cover himself. That he believed in God does not at all appear'.⁴⁴⁵

Early the following year, in 1866, Carlyle delivered his inaugural address as rector to the University of Edinburgh. As noted above, it was possible to combine Stoic notions of self-mastery with Roman ideals of heroism, virtue, and self-sacrifice, something which Carlyle had done in his earlier writings. In his address, Carlyle encouraged the students to study the history of Rome, explaining that the Romans

believed that Jupiter Optimus – Jupiter Maximus – was lord of the universe, and that he had appointed the Romans to become the chief of men, provided they followed his commands – to brave all difficulty, and to stand up with an invincible front – to be ready to do and die; and also to have the same sacred regard to veracity, to promise, to integrity, and all that the

⁴⁴⁴*Frederick the Great*, IX:73.

⁴⁴⁵'Mr. Carlyle's Last Chapter in the Book of Kings', in *The Eclectic Review*, IX (Oct. 1865), 299-324 (301-302).

virtues surround that noblest quality of men – courage – to which the Romans gave the name of virtue, manhood, as the one thing ennobling for a man.⁴⁴⁶

As a writer in the *Spectator* observed, from Carlyle's inaugural address 'might easily be compiled a "shorter catechism" of the Carlylian faith'. According to the author, this 'faith' consisted in 'belief in courage – the Roman *virtus*, as almost the sum and substance of all human goodness', and also a marked 'preference for the Roman type of character, with its religion of imperial duty'. Moreover, the author then made clear what distinguished this 'faith' from Christianity, placing, as earlier reviewers had done, the emphasis on sin. He remarked: 'Mr. Carlyle has almost *no* sympathy with that feeling for holiness as holiness, that horror of sin as sin, which feels a certain infinite and mysterious anguish for the voluntary breaking of divine law'. 'On the whole', the reviewer concluded, 'Mr. Carlyle's religion, free, masculine, noble in its type, scarcely succeeds in being a faith'.⁴⁴⁷

While the Romans and Frederick the Great had practised these virtues primarily in the field of war, Carlyle clearly believed that in the modern world, their most appropriate terrain was that of peaceful work. In this sense, Carlyle, as in his earlier writings, continued to use the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism' as a means to re-situate classical virtues into the world of work. In the inaugural address, he had encouraged his audience to 'see what kind of work you can do; for it is the first of all problems for a man to find out what kind of work he is to do in the universe'.⁴⁴⁸ The following year, in 'Shooting Niagara' (1867), Carlyle called for an 'Industrial hero', or 'Industrial noble', to 'recivilise, out of its now utter savagery, the world of Industry'.⁴⁴⁹ The 'law' of such 'enterprises' would be 'grim labour, earnest and continual; certainty of many contradictions, disappointments; a life, not of ease and pleasure, but of noble and sorrowful toil'.⁴⁵⁰ One particularly pressing task was to turn back the rise of '*Cheap and Nasty*', that is, poor, shoddy workmanship. According to Carlyle, the recent practices of trade unions, particularly strikes, represented 'diabolic short-cuts towards wages; clutchings at money without just work done', '*Cheap and Nasty* in another form'. In opposition, Carlyle argued that the 'glory of a workman', ought to be that 'he does his work well'. Again stressing the martial virtues, now displaced into work, Carlyle then claimed that doing 'work well' ought to be a man's 'most precious possession: like the "honour of a soldier,"

446 *On the Choice of Books: An Address Delivered to the Students of the University of Edinburgh, April 2, 1866* (London: George & Harrap, n.d.), 12.

447 'Mr. Carlyle's Religion', in *The Spectator* (7th Apr. 1866), 377-379.

448 *On the Choice of Books: An Address*, 8.

449 'Shooting Niagara' [Aug. 1867], *CME* VII:225-226.

450 'Shooting Niagara', 238.

dearer to him than life'.⁴⁵¹ In a text written in 1872, and not published until after his death, Carlyle repeated these strictures, contrasting 'the old Trades-Unions (called *Guilds*) of former centuries', which taught that 'the "*honour of a workman*"... consisted in faithful, skilful, and excellent delivery of work', with the new 'Trades-Unions', which were 'avowedly for increase of wages alone'.⁴⁵² As has been argued above, Carlyle valued work primarily as a means to self-mastery, and as a binding social ethos. From this perspective, it is perhaps not surprising that he found some of the practices of trades unions so objectionable. Nonetheless, despite these evil omens, Carlyle then made one final explicit reference to the Saint-Simonian concept of industrialism, declaring:

My hope and prophecy used to be that instead of 'Feudalism and Preservation of the Game,' we shall have 'Industrialism and Government of the Wisest:' and so, on the whole, I still firmly believe, no alternative except that, or 'The Pit of Darkness for us All,' be seeming possible to me.⁴⁵³

IV.

ECHOES OF INDUSTRIALISM: G. J. HOLYOAKE (1879-1896)

A previous section of this chapter examined the sympathetic reception of Carlyle's ideas in the *Reasoner*, a 'secularist' newspaper edited by a former Owenite, George Jacob Holyoake, during the late 1840s and early 1850s. In the meantime, Holyoake had become a leading member of the Co-operative movement, and, as this section will suggest, continued to draw upon Carlyle's ideas regarding labour. In his *Self-Help by the People: The History of Cooperation in Rochdale* (1857), Holyoake had explained, in a chapter that began with a citation from Carlyle, that a 'man must have self-denial as well as interest, who steadfastly grinds berries and watches the sale of tea and sugar, and sits for fourteen years upon Candle and Treacle Committees'.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, Holyoake seems to have found Carlyle's notion of self-mastery useful, particularly in the practical business of setting up and sustaining a Co-operative. Some years later, in the second volume of his *History of Co-operation in England* (1879), Holyoake wrote that Carlyle 'has been the most valiant and influential defender of the dignity of honest labour of our time, and has done more than any other writer to bespeak for it

⁴⁵¹'Shooting Niagara', 229-230.

⁴⁵²*The Last Words of Thomas Carlyle. On Trades-Unions, Promoterism and the Signs of the Times* [July 1872] (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1882) 7-10.

⁴⁵³*Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁴⁵⁴George Jacob Holyoake, *Self-Help by the People: The History of Cooperation in Rochdale*, 'Part I. 1844-1857' [1857], 6th ed. (London: London Book Store, 1867), 59-60.

that importance and respect and position which it is acquiring'.⁴⁵⁵ He then cited with approval Carlyle's censures against modern trade unions, continuing:

A trades council are not leaders of art in industry, they are, with a few exceptions, mere connoisseurs in strikes. All a union does is to strike against low wages, they never strike against doing bad work. It will be a great thing for the reputation of industry in England when they do this... Trades unions ought to resent the demand that their members should do bad work, as an affront upon their skill and character as workmen. A few well devised strikes on this principle, would... raise the whole character of industry in England in a few years.⁴⁵⁶

As has been seen in previous sections, Carlyle had presented work primarily as a means to self-mastery, and also as a form of service, carried out for the good of the community. Moreover, these ideas had found a sympathetic echo in the *Reasoner*. From this perspective, it is hardly surprising that Holyoake objected to some of the practices of modern trade unions. To him, these smacked of idleness, selfishness, and greed, that is, of those vicious and self-defeating passions that work had been intended to obviate. Moreover, such practices were manifestly detrimental to the public good. As Holyoake put it: 'There is conventional but no moral difference in doing bad work and picking the purchaser's pocket. A bungler is but a thief with a circumbendibus in his method'.⁴⁵⁷

In *English Secularism: A Confession of Belief* (1896), Holyoake once again returned to Carlyle. As has been argued in previous sections, Carlyle's contemporaries, unlike later commentators, did not see him as a 'Calvinist', nor as a Christian more generally. To the contrary, they frequently accused him of resurrecting the theories of heathen philosophers, particularly those of the Stoics. However, despite the protestations of such mainstream reviewers, contributors to the *Reasoner* had rather appreciated Carlyle's ideas, drawing upon them, in an attempt to formulate a 'secularist', non-Christian ethics, rooted in service, duty, and work. Some decades later, in a chapter of *English Secularism* entitled 'Ethical Certitude', Holyoake explained what distinguished 'secularism' from conventional forms of religious belief:

⁴⁵⁵George Jacob Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England: Its Literature and Its Advocates*, Vol. II, 'The Constructive Period – 1845-1878' (London: Trübner & Co., 1879), 259. Similarly, in his memoirs, Holyoake wrote that Carlyle 'has been the friend of the industrious by exalting the dignity of labour, and inspiring it with honesty of execution'. (*Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* [1892] [London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909], I:191-192).

⁴⁵⁶Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, Vol. II, 'The Constructive Period – 1845-1878', 262-263.

⁴⁵⁷*Ibid.*

[For secularists] Duty consists in doing the right because it is just to others, and because we must set the example of doing right to others, or we have no claim that others shall do right to us... Secularism does not profess to be infallible, but it acts on honest principles. It seeks to put progress on the business footing of good faith. Adherents who accept the theory of this life for this life dwell in a land of their own – the land of certitude. Science and utilitarian morality are kings in that country, and rule by right of conquest over error and superstition.

Indeed, given the argument made above regarding 'social utility' and 'industrialism', that is, about useful work undertaken for the common good, the positive reference to 'utilitarian morality' is significant. Holyoake then cited a passage from Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* already encountered above, continuing:

Carlyle has told us [in *Sartor Resartus*] that only two men are to be honored, and no third – the mechanic and the thinker: he who works with honest hand, making the world habitable; and he who works with his brain, making thought artistic and true. “All the rest,” he adds with noble scorn, “are chaff, which the wind may blow whither it listeth.” The certainty of heaven is for the useful alone. Mere belief is the easiest, the poorest, the shabbiest device by which conscientious men ever attempted to scale the walls of Paradise.⁴⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

In her obituary of Carlyle, Julia Wedgwood praised him for having 'raised industry' from the 'associations with slavery' it had held within the 'classical ideal'.⁴⁵⁹ What Wedgwood was referring to was the fact that within ancient Greek and Roman thought, labour was considered servile and degrading, 'narrowing the faculties of man, while participation in the public life of the *polis* fulfilled them'.⁴⁶⁰ However, as this chapter has suggested, Carlyle, with the aid of the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism', had effectively turned this 'classical ideal' upside down, presenting work not only as the most effective means to self-mastery and self-development, but also as the most valuable form of virtue, duty, and patriotism. Indeed, in this sense, Carlyle's ideas were far more classical than 'Calvinist', and would be far more aptly understood as 'pre-Christian' than 'post-Christian'.

⁴⁵⁸George Jacob Holyoake, *English Secularism: A Confession of Belief* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1896), 86-89

⁴⁵⁹[Wedgwood, Julia], 'A Study of Carlyle', in *Contemporary Review*, XXXIX (Apr. 1881), 585-609 (595).

⁴⁶⁰John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 65-7

According to Fred Kaplan, Carlyle 'substituted for Christian theology his personal belief that the universe is a spiritual structure illumined by the divine force within man and the cosmos'.⁴⁶¹ However, there was nothing particularly 'personal' about this 'belief', it having been a defining characteristic of Stoic discourse for millennia. Indeed, this was readily recognised by reviewers in the periodical press, who accused Carlyle of having reproduced the pride of ancient philosophers, effectively denying original sin, and suggesting that man might attain to self-mastery and virtue by sheer force of will. If, as Norman Vance has suggested, 'the secular hero is captain of his fate and master of his own soul', whereas 'the Christian hero must acknowledge Christ as captain and master', then Carlyle was without doubt an advocate of secular heroism, rather than 'Christian manliness' (as Vance mistakenly asserts).⁴⁶² Indeed, contrary to Vance's claims, this was what separated Carlyle from 'Christian Socialists' such as F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, both of whom explicitly denied any affinity with the 'pantheism' of Carlyle.⁴⁶³ As has been suggested above, Carlyle believed that, in order to realise its potential, 'industrialism' would have to be 'organised', a theme that will be examined in greater depth in chapter 4. However, if, as William Reddy has recently argued, 'a normative style of emotional management' is necessary to 'every political regime',⁴⁶⁴ then Carlyle's ideals of self-mastery, virtue, and heroic self-sacrifice were an essential condition of his proposals for the 'Organisation of Labour'.

Quite why Carlyle himself was so full of 'Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation', and 'Despair' (*Past and Present*) is not a question that can be entered into here.⁴⁶⁵ Nor is that of the posterity of his thought, and particularly his stoicism, during the later Victorian era. However, in closing, we might do worse than to cite the following assessment of Matthew Arnold, written by Richard Holt Hutton in 1887. Arnold, Hutton claimed, belonged

⁴⁶¹Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 114.

⁴⁶²Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 7.

⁴⁶³For instance, Maurice referred to Carlyle's lectures *On Heroes* as 'wild pantheistic rant' (Maurice to his wife, 13th May 1840, in *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice, chiefly told by his own letters*, ed. F. Maurice [London: Macmillan and Co., 1884], I:283), while Kingsley wrote to a correspondent: 'one statement I must energetically contradict, that I am in anywise in theology a follower of Mr. Thomas Carlyle... I am [not] a Pantheist' (Kingsley to Rev. Dr. Rigg, 5th Apr. 1857, in *Charles Kingsley, His Letters and His Life*, ed. Mrs. Kingsley [London: Henry S. King & Co., 1877], II:22).

⁴⁶⁴William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 121.

⁴⁶⁵In 1866, the historian Connop Thirlwall, an acquaintance of Carlyle, wrote to a correspondent: 'I do not know whether people in general have a notion that he is deficient in feeling. I was always sure of the reverse' (letter dated 2nd Aug. 1866, in Thirlwall, *Letters to a Friend*, ed. A. Penrhyn Stanley [Boston MA: Roberts Brothers, 1883], 85). In her *Autobiography*, Harriet Martineau, another acquaintance, wrote: 'His excess of sympathy has been, I believe, the master-pain of his life. He does not know what to do with it, and with its bitterness, seeing that human life is full of pain to those who look for it: and the savageness which has come to be a main characteristic of this singular man is, in my opinion, a mere expression of his intolerable sympathy with the suffering. He cannot express his love and pity in natural acts, like other people; and it shows itself too often in unnatural speech' (Martineau, *Autobiography*, [London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1877], I:381-382).

rather to the stoical than to the religious school – the school which magnifies self-dependence and regards serene calm, not passionate worship, as the highest type of the moral life... Mr. Arnold seems to have imbibed the prejudices of the scientific season of blossom, when the uniformity of nature first became a kind of gospel... when Emerson's and Carlyle's imaginative scepticism [first] took hold of cultivated Englishmen.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁶Richard Holt Hutton, *Essays on some of the Modern Guides to English Thought in Matters of Faith* [1887], new ed. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1900), 131-132. I am indebted for this reference to David J. DeLaura, 'Carlyle and Arnold: The Religious Issue', in *Carlyle Past and Present: A Collection of New Essays*, ed. K. J. Fielding and Rodger L. Tarr (London: Vision Press, 1976), 127-154 (134).

2.

'From the Past, in a circuitous way, illustrate the Present and the Future':

History



John Rogers Herbert, 'Laborare est orare' (1862).

INTRODUCTION

Unlike other aspects of his thought, Carlyle's indebtedness to the Saint-Simonians regarding his concept of history has been the subject of significant scholarly attention. In his *Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians: The Concept of Historical Periodicity* (1941), Hill Shine demonstrated that Carlyle, in line with the writings of the Saint-Simonians, continued to view history as an alternating series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras, taking place on a progressive curve.⁴⁶⁷ However, Shine's thesis was immediately challenged by René Wellek, who argued that there was an 'unbridgeable gulf' between the philosophy of history of the Saint-Simonians and that of Carlyle. For Wellek, the former were heirs to the 'rationalism' of eighteenth-century France, seeking to establish laws of

⁴⁶⁷Hill Shine, *Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians: The Concept of Historical Periodicity* (Baltimore MA: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), 4-25, 54.

historical evolution by which to predict the future, whereas Carlyle was indebted primarily to the 'historicism' of nineteenth-century Germany, having 'never tried to establish laws of historical evolution', and 'never thought of a detailed prediction of the future'.⁴⁶⁸ Over subsequent decades, Wellek's argument seems to have carried the day, having been endorsed by several more recent historians, including Rosemary Jann and John Burrow.⁴⁶⁹ However, in a footnote, Burrow added that 'any comprehensive account' of Carlyle's theory of history would have to deal with Saint-Simonism, and the subject thus seems worth revisiting in greater detail.⁴⁷⁰

In the following chapter, an attempt will be made to vindicate Shine's conclusion that Carlyle, throughout his historical writings, remained considerably indebted to the Saint-Simonian concept of history as a series of 'critical' and 'organic' eras. Indeed, this concept became something of a *Leitmotif* in Carlyle's thought, and is essential to understanding his response to contemporary politics (chapter 3), as well as his vision of a future 'Organisation of Labour' (chapter 4). However, in revisiting the subject of Saint-Simonism, a number of other points will also be made, concerning hitherto unexplored aspects of Carlyle's historical thought. First, it will be argued that the young Carlyle, prior to his contact with the Saint-Simonians, had subscribed to the classical understanding of history as *magistra vitae*, or 'teacher of life'. Moreover, he also feared that history risked being stripped of its didactic role by more recent notions of linear progress, which implied that the moderns had little to learn from the past.⁴⁷¹ Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle used their theory of 'organic' eras to reinvigorate the idea of history as *magistra vitae*, suggesting that the 'organic' institutions of the middle ages might serve as a model for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. Second, this chapter will take issue with a hoary, persistent cliché of

468Wellek also argued that 'Carlyle is an absolutist, an ethical rigorist, who applies a standard of truth, sincerity and faith to each and every event or person or epoch with which he is confronted'. See 'Carlyle and the Philosophy of History', in *Philological Quarterly*, 23 (1944), 56-64, 70. Shine very briefly responded to Wellek in footnote to his 'Carlyle's Early Writings and Herder's *Ideen*: The Concept of History', in *Booker Memorial Studies* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), 14.

469See Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1985), 38-40, and John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 253-254. Wellek had already been cited as an authority by Ernst Cassirer, 'The Preparation: Carlyle', in his *The Myth of the State* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1946), 189-223 (190, 221), and G. B. Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus: The Genesis, Structure, and Style of Thomas Carlyle's First Major Work* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 143.

470Ibid. Some years later, Burrow noted that in Carlyle's historical writings, geological theories about alternations of decay and creative convulsion dovetailed with the Saint-Simonian theory of 'organic' and 'critical' eras (Burrow, 'Images of time: from Carlylean Vulcanism to sedimentary gradualism', in *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, ed. Collini, Whatmore and Young [Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 198-223 [219]). However, again, Burrow did not develop the point.

471See generally Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* [1979], trans. Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), ch. 2, and idem., *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Presner et al. (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), ch. 8.

Carlyle as a 'conservative', 'Tory', or 'feudal socialist'.⁴⁷² In brief, it will be argued that Carlyle, despite his admiration for the institutions of the middle ages, did not wish to return to them, to reform them, or to rehabilitate them. To the contrary, he believed, like the Saint-Simonians, that they had been outstripped and rendered obsolete by the rise of industry, and thus merited destruction. Nonetheless, he did believe that such institutions might still provide a model for the qualitatively new 'organic' institutions of the future. Third, this chapter will question received ideas of Carlyle as a nineteenth-century 'Romantic' historian, who opposed the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment'.⁴⁷³ As Mark Salber Phillips has recently shown, 'Scottish Enlightenment' historians had sought to break with the elite political history of the past, widening their scope of inquiry to 'society', 'sentiment', 'opinion', and 'manners'.⁴⁷⁴ The young Carlyle wholeheartedly agreed with this reorientation, and, despite his frequent proclamations of his own originality, remained considerably indebted to it in his later writings.⁴⁷⁵ Thus, at least with regard to Carlyle, the idea of a sudden break or rupture between the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment' and nineteenth-century 'Romanticism' is perhaps misleading.⁴⁷⁶ However, Carlyle also developed and specified the approach of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' to historical writing, placing a strong emphasis on vivid depictions of 'work' and

472According to Cassirer, Carlyle 'was no revolutionary; he was a conservative' ('The Preparation: Carlyle', 189). For George Levine, Carlyle showed 'an essentially conservative impulse' (Levine, *The Boundaries of Fiction: Carlyle, Macaulay, Newman* [Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968], 17-18). Discussing Engels' review of Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Peter Demetz refers to Carlyle as an 'arch-Tory' (Demetz, *Marx, Engels, and the Poets* [Chicago, 1967], 38-40). For his part, Simon Heffer suggests that Carlyle proposed 'a retreat to feudalism' (*Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995], 4). Borrowing the term 'reactionary romanticism' from the Frankfurt School theorist Herbert Marcuse, Gregory Maertz writes that Carlyle showed 'a conservative tendency to idealise the past. And Carlyle's apology for the past and its institutions are as passionate as Edmund Burke's' (Maertz, 'Carlyle's Mediation of Goethe and Its European Context', in *Scottish Literary Journal* 24:2 [1997], 59-78 [65-66]). According to Michael Levin, 'Carlyle's message was one aspect of Tory humanitarianism or what Marx called "feudal socialism"' (Levin, *The Condition of England Question: Carlyle, Mill, Engels* [Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998], 36). Rob Breton calls Carlyle 'a Tory par excellence', stating that he belonged to 'the conservative tradition' (*Gospels and Grit: Work and Labour in Carlyle, Conrad, and Orwell* [Toronto and Buffalo NY: University of Toronto Press, 2005], 35-37).

473For a standard treatment of Carlyle as a 'Romantic' historian, see Hedva Ben-Israel, *English Historians on the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 116-147. More recently, John Morrow has dealt with Carlyle as a 'Romantic', alongside contemporaries such as Southey and Coleridge ('Romanticism and political thought in the early nineteenth century', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Stedman Jones and Claeys [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011], 64-69). In another work, Morrow, discussing Carlyle's portrayal of the middle ages in *Past and Present*, noted that such juxtapositions of medieval and modern had 'already been employed by Robert Southey in *Colloquies of Society: Sir Thomas More* (1829), and pictorially by A. W. Pugin in his *Contrasts* (1836)' (*Thomas Carlyle* [London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006], 79). However, as we shall see, Carlyle was in fact extremely critical of figures such as Southey, Coleridge, and Pugin. For some examples of this hostility, see Michael Timko, 'Gods of the Lower World: Romantic Egoists and Carlylean Heroes', in *Browning Institute Studies*, 14 (1986), 125-140 (132-136).

474On Britain, see Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

475This is hinted at in passing by Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment*, 199-201, 259-260, 346-347. The point deserves to be developed further.

476In Germany, the traditional distinction between eighteenth-century Enlightenment and nineteenth-century 'Historicism' has been called into question by Stefan Jordan, *Geschichtstheorie in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Die Schwellenzeit zwischen Pragmatismus und klassischem Historismus* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 1999), esp. ch. 1, ch. 2, ch. 6.

'workers'. This has perhaps been obscured by some of the more extravagant passages of Carlyle's lectures *On Heroes* (1840), in which he notoriously claimed that 'Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of Great Men'.⁴⁷⁷ However, it is noteworthy that in private correspondence, Carlyle referred to these lectures as 'a detestable mixture of "Prophecy and Playacting"'.⁴⁷⁸ Fourth, this chapter will suggest that Wellek's conclusion that Carlyle was indebted to 'German historicism', which, as noted above, has generally been accepted by subsequent historians and Carlyle scholars, was in fact wide of the mark. To the contrary, the growing reception of German Historicism in Britain from mid-century onward precipitated a rapid decline in Carlyle's standing as a serious historian, and led to him being accused not only of amateurism, but also of being attached to an outmoded notion of history as *magistra vitae*. In sum, this chapter will argue that Carlyle's historical thought owed more to a distinctive amalgam of classical, Scottish, and French (Saint-Simonian) influences than it ever did to 'German Historicism'.

I.

EARLY HISTORICAL THOUGHT: A TALE OF TWO LANGUAGES (1815-1830)

Carlyle's early writings bore the mark of two distinct historical languages, one 'Ancient', one 'Modern'. The first revolved around the classical idea of history as *magistra vitae*, that is, as the 'teacher of life'. On this understanding, history ought to deal primarily with public affairs, delineating the lives and deeds of noble, virtuous warriors and statesmen. The intention was to provide moral instruction to readers, and models for emulation in the present. In order to do this effectively, it was essential to select only the most relevant, striking facts, and to present them to readers in a vivid, engaging style. Although this understanding of history ultimately stemmed from the ancient, and particularly the Roman, world, it continued to resonate through the Renaissance and beyond. As George H. Nadel has pointed out, 'literature and education' continued to be dominated by the Roman classics, and, for this reason, were 'given over to classical didacticism and moralistic purpose: to instilling virtue'.⁴⁷⁹ For instance, around the end of the seventeenth century, England and France witnessed the so-called 'Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns'. In England,

⁴⁷⁷*On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 1-2.

⁴⁷⁸TC to Charles Redwood, 8th Dec. 1840, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-), 12:349-350.

⁴⁷⁹George H. Nadel, 'Philosophy of History Before Historicism', in *History and Theory*, 3:3 (1964), 291-315 (292-293). Nadel also notes that this was attitude was shared by many Stoics and by Tacitus, whom, as we have seen in previous chapters, Carlyle greatly admired (ibid, 294-295, 302).

Sir William Temple (whom Carlyle read) took up the cudgels on behalf of the 'Ancients', defending the idea that 'the great ends of History', and 'the Chief Care of all Historians', ought to be to 'argue the Virtues or Vices of Princes', and to thus provide 'Example or Instruction to Posterity'.⁴⁸⁰ Some years later, Temple's arguments were reiterated by his former secretary, Jonathan Swift, in his *Tale of a Tub* and *Battle of the Books*, both of which the young Carlyle read and appreciated.⁴⁸¹ Thus, the young Carlyle would certainly have been aware of the 'ancient' understanding of history, and of some of the more recent debates around it. Indeed, he seems to have sympathised with the ancients, writing in 1818 that 'there are few feelings more pure and delightful than the homage paid to departed virtue' or 'the contempt' which 'visits the unsuccessful or successful wickedness of the dead'.⁴⁸² Three years later, in one of his first published articles, a review of Joanna Baillie's *Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters* (1821), Carlyle claimed:

If history is valuable, chiefly as it offers examples by which human nature is illustrated, and human conduct may be regulated, then it is of the highest importance that such great characters as have influenced the destinies of men, be held up to us in the degree of light that shall most powerfully elicit the generous expansion of soul, which a view of them is fitted to inspire. We cannot feel too strongly the admiration of highly-gifted virtue, or the fear of highly-gifted wickedness.⁴⁸³

As Nadel notes, 'it was to the persistence of Plutarch's *Lives [of Noble Greeks and Romans]* as the most popular classical reading from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century that the idea of exemplar history owed much of its persistence'.⁴⁸⁴ It is thus noteworthy that in 1823, two years after the publication of the article cited above, Carlyle advised Jane Baillie Welsh to read Plutarch's *Lives* before moving on to the historians of 'modern times'.⁴⁸⁵ The same year, Carlyle also encouraged his brother to read the works of Charles Rollin, the author of an *Histoire romain* (1738-48), stating: 'You will do well... to take up with Rollin... I advise you to begin with him immediately'.⁴⁸⁶ As

480Sir William Temple, *Introduction to the History of England*, cited in Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 159-166 (166). Carlyle mentions having read Temple's works in a journal entry dated 7th Dec 1826, in *Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. C. E. Norton (New York: The Grolier Club, 1898), 84.

481Levine, *Humanism and History*, 167-168. In 1821, Carlyle asked his brother: 'Dean Swift is a merry grinning dog. Did you ever see his tale of a Tub [?]' (TC to John A. Carlyle, Mar. 1821, *CL* 1:332-333). Two years later, he wrote: 'Swift is also a first-rate fellow: his Gulliver, and Tale of a Tub, and many of his smaller pieces are inimitable in their way' (TC to John A. Carlyle, 11th Nov. 1823, *CL* 2:465-469).

482TC to James Johnston, 30th Apr. 1818, *CL* 1:124.

483'Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters', [Oct. 1821], reprinted in *Collectanea Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Jones (Canton PA: The Kirgate Press, 1903), 26-28.

484Nadel, 'Philosophy of History Before Historicism', 296-298.

485TC to JBW, 28th Oct. 1822, *CL* 2:183-190.

486TC to Alexander Carlyle, 4th Jan. 1823, *CL* 2:255-258.

Nadel comments, Rollin, who believed that 'history' ought 'to be studied before all other subjects on the grounds that it affords exemplar lessons of virtue', was 'still well read in the nineteenth century', and Carlyle seems to have been a case in point.⁴⁸⁷ Even some years later, in January 1830, shortly before his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle wrote, in an article on 'Jean Paul Richter':

it is the task of the Biographer to fill-up into actual coherent figure, and bring home to our experience, or at least our clear undoubting admiration, thereby to instruct and edify us in many ways. Conducted on such principles, the Biography of great men, especially of great Poets, that is, of men in the highest degree noble-minded and wise, might become one of the most dignified and valuable species of composition.⁴⁸⁸

As we shall see, this classical understanding of history, as 'homage paid to departed virtue', and as 'examples by which human conduct may be regulated', would continue to resonate in Carlyle's later historical writings.

Another notable aspect of this classical understanding of history was that it was cyclical. Indeed, given human beings' innate tendency towards selfishness and sensuality, no polity could hope to survive for more than a given time. In this sense, history presented the spectacle of an alternating *corsi* and *recorsi* of virtue and corruption. With regard to the latter, the decline and fall of the Roman republic served as an archetype. In the introduction to this thesis, it was noted that the young Carlyle particularly admired the Roman historian Tacitus.⁴⁸⁹ For instance, in 'Voltaire' (1829), Carlyle described the latter as 'the wisest, most penetrating man of his generation'.⁴⁹⁰ Later in the same article, Carlyle went on to compare the 'luxury' and 'depravity' of old regime France to the last years of Rome, writing:

With the Romans, things went what we should call their natural course: Liberty, public spirit, quietly declined into a *caput-mortuum*; Self-love, Materialism, Baseness even to the disbelief in all possibility of Virtue, stalked more and more imperiously abroad; till the body-politic, long since deprived of its vital circulating fluids, had now become a putrid

487Nadel, 'Philosophy of History Before Historicism', 307.

488'Jean Paul Richter (Again)' [Jan. 1830], in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, People's Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), III:5.

489For references to Tacitus, principally the *Annals* and the *Histories*, see TC to Robert Mitchell, 16th Feb. 1818, *CL* 1:118-122, TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 18th Nov. 1822, *CL* 2:204-210, TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 16th Dec. 1822, *CL* 2:226-232, journal entry for 7th Dec. 1826, in *Two Notebooks*, 86, and entry for [Mar. 1827 ?], in *ibid.*, 122.

490'Voltaire' [Apr. 1829], in *CME*, II:122.

carcass, and fell in pieces to be the prey of ravenous wolves.⁴⁹¹

Given the explicit reference to Tacitus earlier in the article, Carlyle's most likely sources were the latter's *Histories* and *Annals*. Indeed, as Norman Vance has pointed out, Tacitus's works provided many nineteenth-century readers with an account of how the Roman republic, which had long been sustained by the virtue and patriotism of its citizens, eventually declined and perished through the corrosive influence of luxury and selfishness.⁴⁹² For Carlyle, this cyclical conception of history would have been further reinforced by some of the German writers he encountered, particularly during the late 1820s. For instance, as several scholars have pointed out, in thinkers such as Lessing, Herder, and Goethe, Carlyle would have found ideas about history as a progressive revelation, proceeding through cycles of growth, decay and regeneration, and alternating periods of 'belief' and 'unbelief'.⁴⁹³ However, it is worth noting that the German contribution to Carlyle's historical thought has perhaps at times been overstated. In particular, many of these ostensibly 'German' cyclical ideas were in fact common currency amongst various classical, English, Scottish and French writers.⁴⁹⁴

However, the young Carlyle was also familiar with another, and, in many ways, contradictory, historical language, namely, that of the 'Scottish Enlightenment'. Simply put, this envisaged history in terms of linear progress, holding that all societies passed through four stages of development, namely hunting (or 'savagery'), pasturage (or 'barbarism'), agriculture, and, finally, commerce.⁴⁹⁵ Within this language, liberty and civilisation were conceived as uniquely modern, being the product of commercial society. For this reason, it was hard to see what lessons the moderns might learn from the past, this being, after all, a morass of savagery, barbarism, darkness and superstition.⁴⁹⁶ For the purposes of this chapter, it is sufficient to note that for the young Carlyle, this linear conception

491 'Voltaire' [1829], in *CME*, II:175.

492 Norman Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 24, 30.

493 A good starting point is Charles Frederick Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought, 1819-1834* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1934), ch. VI. On Herder, see also Louise Merwin Young, *Thomas Carlyle and the Art of History* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), 22-26, and Shine, 'Carlyle's Early Writings and Herder's *Ideen*'.

494 This is touched upon by Wellek, 'Carlyle and the Philosophy of History', 59-66.

495 The classic statement is Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), ch. 4. This theory is dealt with in greater detail in chapter 5, which addresses Carlyle's imperial thought.

496 This called into question not only the exemplary character of ancient Greece and Rome, but also that of England's 'Ancient Constitution'. See variously J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Political Economy of Burke's Analysis of the French Revolution', in his *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 10, Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 21-35, 55-57, Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 29, 37-41, and R. J. Smith, *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688-1863* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 95-96.

of progress risked stripping history of its status as *magistra vitae*, that is, as 'teacher of life'. For instance, in 1818, having read the principal historical works of Edward Gibbon, David Hume, and William Robertson, all of whom, in their different ways, subscribed to this linear concept of progress, Carlyle complained that the 'whole historical triumvirate are abundantly destitute of virtuous feeling', before adding: 'I wonder what benefit is derived from reading all this stuff'.⁴⁹⁷

Nonetheless, there was another aspect of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' understanding of history to which the young Carlyle responded far more positively. As Mark Salber Phillips has recently shown, the historians of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' adopted a novel approach to historical writing, in an attempt to make the latter more relevant to the needs of a modern, commercial society. Whereas the classical writers discussed above had emphasised the lives of statesmen and warriors, focusing on political life, diplomacy, and war, the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment sought to broaden the scope of inquiry to 'society' as a whole. As Salber Phillips points out, central to this attempt were the concepts of 'manners' and 'opinion'.⁴⁹⁸ As a letter dated 1820 demonstrates, the young Carlyle subscribed wholeheartedly to this approach. He wrote to his brother John, referring to their other brother, Alexander:

Sandy tells me that you and he are in the habit of attending chiefly to the manners, opinions & general features of the different periods, which you Read about. This is the true way of proceeding in the study of history. It is good, surely... to know about battles & sieges and such matters... but a person who gathers *nothing more* from the annals of a nation, is not much wiser than one who should treasure up the straw of a threshing-floor and leave the grain behind.⁴⁹⁹

As we shall see, despite his protestations to originality, such notions of 'society', 'manners', and 'opinion' would remain central to Carlyle's later historical writings.

Before moving on to look at the Saint-Simonians, the above section should be briefly summarised. In sum, Carlyle's early historical thought was marked by three basic tensions or contradictions. The first of these was between, on the one hand, the classical idea of history as *magistra vitae*, teaching by the example of the past, and, on the other, more modern notions of

497TC to Robert Mitchell, 16th Feb. 1818, *CL* 1:120-121.

498See Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment*.

499TC to John A. Carlyle, 26th Jan. 1820, *CL* 1:224-225. See also 'Montesquieu' [1820], reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays, Chiefly Biographical*, ed. Crockett [1897], new ed. (London: Gibbings & Company, 1901), 24, and 'Voltaire', 122-123.

linear progress, in which the didactic relevance of the past was seriously called into question. A second, related tension was that between history as cyclical, and history as linear progress. Finally, the third tension was that between, on the one hand, the elitism of classical history, which was concerned primarily with public or political life, and, on the other, a more recent concern with 'society' and 'manners'. As we shall see, these three basic tensions would be, if not resolved, than at least attenuated, by Saint-Simonism.

II.

THE SAINT-SIMONIANS: HISTORY AS 'ORGANIC' AND 'CRITICAL' ERAS (1830-1832)

In one of his first letters to the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle stated that he considered 'especially important' their 'delineations' of 'the Critical and the Organic alternation in man's history'.⁵⁰⁰ In this section, an attempt will be made to sketch out exactly what Carlyle was referring to. Specifically, this section will outline the Saint-Simonians' general definitions of these terms, while also paying particular attention to their characterisation of the middle ages as the most recent 'organic' era. In the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians sought to reconcile cyclical and progressive understandings of history, arguing that while historical progress was a fact, it occurred by means of a series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. Indeed, this theory was a *Leitmotif* of the Saint-Simonians' thought, and, as we shall see in chapters 3 and 4, framed both their response to the present, and their vision of the future. In the *Doctrine*, the Saint-Simonians set out the following general definitions:

In organic eras, the aim of *social* activity is clearly defined; all efforts... are dedicated to the accomplishment of this aim, towards which men are continually impelled, through the entire course of their lives, by education and legislation. General relations being fixed, individual relations, modelled upon the former, are equally so; the object that society seeks to attain is revealed to all hearts, to all minds; it becomes easy to discern the talents best suited to furthering this process, and the truly superior find themselves as a matter of course invested with power; there is *legitimacy, sovereignty, authority*... harmony reigns in all social relations.

With regard to 'critical' eras, the Saint-Simonians explained:

⁵⁰⁰TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 17th May 1831, *CL* 5:276-280.

Critical eras offer a diametrically opposed spectacle. At their beginning they do, admittedly, show a certain unity of action, namely a generally felt need to destroy; however, divergence soon spreads and becomes universal; in all quarters anarchy becomes manifest... the aim of social activity is altogether unknown, the uncertainty that prevails in general relations spreads to individual relations; genuine talent is no longer and can no longer be discerned; the legitimacy of authority is contested; a similar war breaks out amongst *individual* interests, which have acquired an increasing predominance over the *general* interest, and, finally, *egotism* succeeds to *devotion*, and *atheism* to *piety*.⁵⁰¹

Indeed, this characterisation of a 'critical' era arguably bore a strong resemblance to the account of the decline and fall of the Roman republic that Carlyle had set out, one year previously, in 'Voltaire' (1829). According to the Saint-Simonians, there had been two 'organic' eras in the past, namely the 'polytheism' of the ancient world, and medieval Catholicism. Similarly, there had also been two 'critical' eras, the first lasting from the appearance of the Greek philosophers up until the birth of Christ (this serving to destroy 'polytheism'), and the second from the time of Luther, through the French Revolution, up until the present day (this serving to destroy the institutions of the middle ages).⁵⁰² Regardless of the historical accuracy or plausibility of this theory, it would have, as we shall see, a profound impact on Carlyle's later thought.

Within this overarching theory of historical progress, the Saint-Simonians placed particular emphasis on the importance of the middle ages, these having been the most recent 'organic' era. In the *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), Saint-Simon had set out his vision of the 'industrialism' of the future. In doing so, he had suggested that the institutions of the medieval Catholic church might serve as a model or example. For instance, Saint-Simon praised the 'immense contributions of the ministers of the altar to the progress of civilisation', particularly their role in 'diminishing the power and stature' of the feudal 'temporal power', to the benefit of 'those engaged in peaceful work'.⁵⁰³ Moreover, he also exalted the (supposedly) meritocratic character of the church, which 'tended to diminish the importance and stature of the aristocracy of birth, and to supersede it by the aristocracy

501 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année. 1829. Seconde Édition* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur and A. Mesnier, 1830), 139-140. Also repeated in *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année. 1829-1830* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur, 1830), 3-5.

502 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 138.

503 Saint-Simon, *Nouveau Christianisme, dialogues entre un conservateur et un novateur* (Paris: Bossange Père and A. Sautet et Cie., 1825), 65.

of talent'.⁵⁰⁴ This extremely rosy view of the medieval church was clearly indebted to the writings of the French 'Counter-Enlightenment', which had sought to re-evaluate and redeem the institutions of the *ancien régime*.⁵⁰⁵ Over subsequent years, the Saint-Simonians further developed these insights regarding the medieval church, integrating them into a systematic theory of history as a series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. For instance, in the *Doctrine*, the Saint-Simonians wrote:

In the midst of a society primitively administered by the sword, and ruled over by an aristocracy based on birth, this entirely pacific association, trampling under foot the privileges of nobility and birth, proclaimed the equality of all men before God, the distribution of *heavenly* punishment and recompense according to man's works, and realised, in its *terrestrial* hierarchy, a new mode of distribution of functions and positions, not according to *birth*, but according to *capacity*, according to *personal merit*.⁵⁰⁶

Moreover, in addition to the church, the Saint-Simonians also sought to rehabilitate the temporal authorities of the middle ages, claiming that 'feudalism put an end to military anarchy, by binding dukes, counts, barons, and all independent proprietors, bearers of arms, together, in a system of reciprocal duties and defence'.⁵⁰⁷ As an article in a volume that D'Eichthal sent to Carlyle explained, while this 'privileged class' 'lived at the expense of those who worked', it also provided a necessary service in return, protecting the former from violence, and thus preventing 'humanity from being plunged back into a state of barbarism'.⁵⁰⁸ Again, as with the overarching theory of 'organic' and 'critical' eras, this view of the middle ages was arguably highly dubious in its historical pedigree. However, as will be seen, it would prove crucial to Carlyle's later writings, particularly in its suggestion that history might still serve to teach by example.

MODERN HISTORY AS THE RISE OF *INDUSTRIE*

Despite their admiration for the 'organic' institutions of the middle ages, the Saint-Simonians made clear that they did not wish to return to this bygone era. In particular, they argued that

⁵⁰⁴Saint-Simon, *Nouveau Christianisme*, 30-31.

⁵⁰⁵Darrin M. McMahon points out that the 'Counter-Enlightenment', being a response to the Enlightenment, was in itself modern and forward-looking. See *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 14-15.

⁵⁰⁶*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 158.

⁵⁰⁷*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 196.

⁵⁰⁸Enfantin, 'Considérations sur les progrès de l'économie politique, dans ses rapports avec l'organisation sociale', in *Le Producteur; journal philosophique de l'industrie, des sciences et des beaux-arts*, tome cinquième (Paris: Sautet et Cie., 1826), 32.

medieval institutions had been unable to accommodate the rise of *industrie*, eventually becoming a burden and an obstacle to the latter. For this reason, they had rightly been cast off and destroyed, in the course of the 'critical' era that began with the Reformation, and culminated in the French Revolution.⁵⁰⁹ Indeed, in making this argument, the Saint-Simonians' drew upon an established tradition in French historical writing, which conceptualised modern history as the rise of *industrie*. In his *De la Monarchie française depuis son établissement jusqu'à nos jours* (1814), the Comte de Montlosier had deplored the decline of the French nobility and the corresponding rise of the commons, or 'Third Estate', a long process that had, according to Montlosier, ultimately issued in the French Revolution. However, Montlosier's counter-revolutionary arguments were immediately turned on their head by a number of liberal, pro-revolutionary historians, who celebrated the revolution as the victorious culmination of the Third Estate's long struggle for freedom. These writers included not only later luminaries of the July Monarchy such as Guizot, but also the group of intellectuals around the *Censeur européen*, notably Augustin Thierry. Between 1817 and 1818, Thierry, who had been for some years the secretary of Saint-Simon, contributed a number of articles to the *Censeur*, in which he argued that the rise of the Third Estate, the emancipation of the communes, and the French Revolution had been stages in the same process, destined to culminate in the final establishment of free political institutions and parliamentary government.⁵¹⁰ In *L'Industrie* (1818), Saint-Simon himself had endorsed this line of argument, writing:

Industry, despite the snubs and humiliation that the *military and feudal class* inflicted upon it, gradually enriched itself by dint of hard work, patience and parsimony. It acquired growing importance and consideration, because it became more numerous.⁵¹¹

Similarly, in the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians also defined progress in terms of the rise of the *industriels*, explaining that 'history shows us how this class, *the most numerous class*, has continually, by its *pacific* work, improved its standing relative to the rest of society'.⁵¹² Moreover, the Saint-Simonians further bolstered this theory of historical progress through reference to various German philosophers, including some of those whom Carlyle was then reading. For

⁵⁰⁹On the gradual corruption of the medieval church, see Saint-Simon, *Nouveau Christianisme*, 30-31.

⁵¹⁰See Stanley Mellon, *The Political Uses of History: A Study of Historians in the French Restoration* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), 6-13, Shirley M. Gruner, 'Political Historiography in Restoration France', in *History and Theory*, 8:3 (1969), 346-365, Lionel Gossman, 'Augustin Thierry and Liberal Historiography', in *History and Theory*, 15:4 (1976), 21-22, and Ceri Crossley, *French Historians and Romanticism: Thierry, Guizot, the Saint-Simonians, Quinet, Michelet* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), esp. ch. 2-4.

⁵¹¹Saint-Simon, *L'Industrie, où Discussions politiques, morales et philosophiques, dans l'intérêt des hommes livrés à des travaux utiles et indépendants*, tome quatrième, premier cahier (Paris: Chez Verdière, 1818), 108-119.

⁵¹²*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 162-163.

instance, Eugène Rodrigues translated Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*, which portrayed history as a progressive revelation, into French, this being, perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the publications that was sent to Carlyle.⁵¹³ However, as Rodrigues had explained in his preface, the Saint-Simonians differed from eighteenth-century theorists of human 'perfectibility' in one crucial respect. While thinkers such as Lessing had remained in the realm of abstraction and pure reason, Saint-Simon had concretely defined progress in terms of the 'the *Fine-Arts*, the *Sciences*, and *Industry*'.⁵¹⁴

Thus, for Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, modern history consisted in the progressive emancipation of *industrie* from the obsolete, superannuated institutions of the medieval past. Indeed, this theory could quite easily have dovetailed with 'Scottish Enlightenment' notions of stadial progress and 'commercial society', with which, as we have seen, the young Carlyle was well-acquainted. However, there was one crucial difference. In *L'Industrie*, Saint-Simon had parted ways with his contemporaries, suggesting that the rise of the *industrieux* tended not to the establishment of liberal or parliamentary institutions (as Thierry and the *Censeur* group had claimed), but rather to the inauguration of an organised industrial system.⁵¹⁵ In this sense, the aim was not to revert to the 'organic' institutions of the middle ages, but rather to use them as a model for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. As the Saint-Simonians explained:

In proclaiming that religion is destined to regain its influence over society, we are far from calling for the re-establishment of the religious institutions of the past, just as we are far from calling for a return to the war and slavery of ancient times. It is a new moral era, a new political era that we proclaim; and it is therefore no less an entirely new religious era.⁵¹⁶

In particular, the new organic era would build upon the progress that mankind had made in industry since the end of the middle ages. As Enfantin, the leader of the Saint-Simonians put it, 'the future' would 'differ from the previous organic era, from Christianity, particularly in its *industrial* development'.⁵¹⁷ However, while the new organic era 'would not be entirely identical with former

⁵¹³*L'Education du genre humain de Lessing, traduit pour la première fois de l'Allemand, sur l'édition de Berlin de 1785, par E. R [Eugène Rodrigues]* (Paris: P. Froment, 1830).

⁵¹⁴*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 111-112.

⁵¹⁵Saint-Simon, *L'Industrie*, tome quatrième, premier cahier, 122-125, 141-151. This theme will be further explored in a subsequent chapter.

⁵¹⁶*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 415.

⁵¹⁷*Religion Saint-Simonienne. Réunion Générale de la Famille. Séances des 19. et 21. Novembre 1831. Suivis par Note sur le Mariage et le Divorce; Lue au Collège de la Religion Saint-Simonienne, le 17. octobre, par le Père Rodriguès* (Paris: Éverat, 1831), 9.

ones', it would 'offer striking analogies with them'.⁵¹⁸ Indeed, this was particularly true regarding the institutions of the middle ages. As the Saint-Simonians explained:

the counts and barons of industry, *organised hierarchically according to merit*, will be the natural judges of the *material* interests of this society, just as the feudal lords were the *natural* judges of military society.⁵¹⁹

Thus, for the Saint-Simonians, the purpose of 'history' was not to 'entertain a bored public by reciting a few little stories', but rather to 'reveal, in certain terms, the future of humanity'.⁵²⁰ Or, in other words, *magistra vitae*.

III.

CARLYLE ON 'ORGANIC' AND 'CRITICAL' ERAS

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Carlyle's enduring debts to the Saint-Simonian concept of 'organic' and 'critical' eras have already received adequate scholarly attention, particularly in the work of Hill Shine.⁵²¹ However, for the rest of this chapter to make sense, it will be necessary to briefly reiterate some of Shine's findings, while making a few additional points in the process. As noted earlier in this chapter, Carlyle, in 'Voltaire' (1829), had set out a fairly standard account of the corruption, decline, and fall of ancient Rome, simultaneously drawing parallels with the demise of the French *ancien régime*. In the hands of Carlyle, the Saint-Simonian theory of 'organic' and 'critical' eras came to resemble a more historical version of the *corsi* and *recorsi* of virtue and corruption, with not only the ancient world, but now also the middle ages, featuring as exemplars of virtuous polity. This was particularly clear in an article entitled 'Characteristics', which Carlyle published in 1831, shortly after his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians.⁵²² Here, I would again suggest that Tacitus served as an intermediary between Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians. In the *Dialogue on Oratory*, Tacitus had written:

at Rome, so long as the constitution was unsettled, so long as the country kept wearing itself

⁵¹⁸*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 78-79.

⁵¹⁹*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 323-324.

⁵²⁰*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 31.

⁵²¹Shine, *Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians: The Concept of Historical Periodicity*.

⁵²²C.f. Tom Lloyd, 'Society and Chaos: Schiller's Impact on Carlyle's Ideas About Revolution', in *Clio* 17:1 (1987), 51-64, who attributes the following passage of 'Characteristics' to Schiller's 'fanciful evocation of ancient Greece' (61).

out with factions and dissensions and disagreements, so long as there was no peace in the forum, no law, no respect for authority, no sense of propriety on the part of the officers of state, the growth of eloquence was doubtless sturdier... If a community could be found in which nobody ever did anything wrong, orators would be just as superfluous among saints as are doctors among those that need no physician. For just as the healing art is very little in demand and makes very little progress in countries where people enjoy good health and strong constitutions, so oratory has less prestige and small consideration where people are well behaved and ready to obey their rulers. What is the use of long arguments in the Senate, when good citizens agree so quickly? ⁵²³

In 'Characteristics', Carlyle claimed that 'Society' had 'its periods of sickness and vigour, of youth, manhood, decrepitude, dissolution and new birth'. During periods of 'vigour' and 'manhood', there was no need to theorise about virtue and public spirit, since the latter were practised as a matter of course. For instance, 'in the vigorous ages' of the 'Roman Republic', 'while the *Decii* were 'rushing with devoted bodies on the enemies of Rome', there was no need for 'Treatises of the Commonwealth' or 'preaching Patriotism'. To the contrary, the advent of the latter suggested that the 'virtue of Patriotism' had 'already sunk from its pristine, all-transcendent condition', becoming a matter of mere theory rather than practice. Thus far, Carlyle echoed Tacitus. However, following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, he also extended this analysis to the middle ages. The 'Loyalty' of the '*Preux Chevaliers*', Carlyle argued ('Loyalty' being but another 'form' of 'Patriotism'), was 'not praised until it had begun to decline'. In sum, Carlyle wrote, as long as 'the mystic significance of the State' dwelt 'vitality in every heart', encircling 'every life as with a second higher life', there was no need for 'self questioning'. Echoing the Saint-Simonians' general definition of an 'organic' era, as well as their periodisation, Carlyle concluded that during 'the antique Republic' and the 'feudal Monarchy', 'Society was what we name healthy, sound at heart'.⁵²⁴ In this sense, the Saint-Simonian concept of history seems to have enabled Carlyle to (at least partially) resolve one of the key tensions that had existed in his earlier historical thought, namely that between 'history as cyclical', and 'history as progress'. While *corsi* and *recorsi* did indeed occur, they did so upon an ascending curve.

Over subsequent years, Carlyle continued to echo the Saint-Simonians' general definition of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. True, he did not refer explicitly to the Saint-Simonians (unsurprisingly,

⁵²³Tacitus, 'A Dialogue on Oratory', trans. W. Peterson, in *Agricola, Germania, Dialogus*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1970), 343-345.

⁵²⁴'Characteristics' [1831], in *CME* IV:11-13.

given the furore they had raised in the British press), and matters were further complicated by his use of mystical phraseology. However, the outlines of the Saint-Simonian theory were nonetheless still visible. For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), Carlyle reiterated one of the Saint-Simonians' central claims, namely, that the medieval period had not been the 'Dark Ages'. He then added, immediately thereafter:

If our era is the Era of Unbelief, why murmur under it; is there not a better coming, nay come? As in longdrawn Systole and longdrawn Diastole, must the period of Faith alternate with the period of Denial; must the vernal growth, the summer luxuriance of all Opinions, Spiritual Representations and Creations, be followed by, and again follow, the autumnal decay, the winter dissolution.⁵²⁵

Several years later, in his *Lectures on the History of Literature* (1838), Carlyle again echoed the Saint-Simonians' general definition of 'organic' and 'critical' eras, referring to these as ages of 'belief' and 'unbelief'. He told his listeners:

All periods in which belief predominates, in which it is the main element, the inspiring principle of action, are distinguished by great, soul-stirring, fertile events, and worthy of perpetual remembrance. And, on the other hand, when unbelief gets the upper hand, that age is unfertile, unproductive, and intrinsically mean; in which there is no pabulum for the spirit of man, and no one can get nourishment for himself!⁵²⁶

Similarly, in the lectures *On Heroes*, delivered two years later, Carlyle argued that

Whole ages, what we call ages of Faith, are original; all men in them, or the most of men in them, sincere. These are the great and fruitful ages: every worker, in all spheres, is a worker not on semblance but on substance; every work issues in a result: the general sum of such work is great; for all of it, as genuine, tends towards one goal; for all of it is *additive*, none of it subtractive. There is true union, true kingship, loyalty, all true and blessed things, so far as the poor Earth can produce blessedness for men.⁵²⁷

Again, there was no explicit reference to the Saint-Simonians (who remained butts of ridicule in

⁵²⁵*Sartor Resartus* [1833-1834], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 87.

⁵²⁶*Lectures on the History of Literature* [delivered 1838], ed. Greene (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1892), 58-60.

⁵²⁷*On Heroes*, 127.

Britain),⁵²⁸ and, as ever, Carlyle's mystical phraseology complicates attempts to identify his sources. However, as noted above, Carlyle had told D'Eichthal that he considered Saint-Simonian 'delineations' of 'the Critical and the Organic alternation in man's history' 'especially important'.⁵²⁹ Moreover, in the passage above, Carlyle characterised 'ages of Faith' in terms of work, authority, and co-operation towards a common goal, all of which featured in the Saint-Simonian definition of an 'organic' era (as cited above). Finally, in several of the above quotations, Carlyle referred to one of the Saint-Simonians' signature doctrines, namely, that of the middle ages as the most recent 'organic' era. In the following section, this point will be developed at greater length.

FEUDALISM AS AN 'ORGANIC' ERA

As noted earlier in this chapter, the young Carlyle had been familiar with the historical writings of the 'Scottish Enlightenment', in which historical progress was conceptualised in terms of a series of four stages (hunting, pasturage, agriculture, and commerce). As Karen O'Brien has pointed out, writers such as William Robertson (whom, as noted above, the young Carlyle had read) identified 'feudalism' as a distinct aspect of the agricultural stage, characterised by the domination of a landed aristocracy, by means of ties of vassalage.⁵³⁰ In this sense, 'feudalism' had already been marked out as a distinct historical period, even if the writers of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' had tended to view it negatively.⁵³¹ Indeed, as O'Brien makes clear, this negative evaluation of feudalism was crucial in providing a rationale for commercial development, centralised political institutions, and union with England. Whereas earlier writers, such as George Buchanan and Andrew Fletcher, had praised the Scottish nobility for their virtue, independent spirit, and willingness to resist the arbitrary power of the crown, later writers such as Robertson largely concurred in portraying them as rude, barbaric, and an obstacle to commercial progress.⁵³² However, for the purposes of the present discussion, what matters is that, in the 'Scottish Enlightenment' literature that the young Carlyle had read, 'feudalism' had already been marked out as a distinct historical stage. Moreover, as Elizabeth M. Vida has pointed out, Carlyle, during the 1820s, would have encountered a more positive portrayal of the middle ages in the writings of German authors such as Novalis, and particularly the latter's *Die Christenheit oder Europa*.⁵³³ These Scottish and German sources, I

528See, for instance, 'The History and Mystery of St. Simonianism', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XXVII (May 1843), 609-614.

529TC to Gustave d'Eichthal, 17th May 1831, *CL* 5:276-280.

530Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 136.

531Smith, *The Gothic Bequest*, 71-75, 156, 196-197.

532See O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment*, 105-122.

533Elizabeth M. Vida, *Romantic Affinities: German Authors and Carlyle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993),

would suggest, served to facilitate Carlyle's acceptance of the Saint-Simonians' theory of the middle ages as an 'organic' era'.⁵³⁴ Moreover, in addition to the Scottish and German contexts, it is worth briefly noting one potentially relevant aspect of the English context. As R. J. Smith has pointed out, English radicals had a long tradition of appealing to the so-called 'Ancient Constitution', opposing what they saw as any attempt to corrupt or adulterate the latter, particularly regarding the rights and liberties of the people. However, according to Smith, the 1832 Reform Act significantly modified the institutions of the state, thus lessening the relevance of the 'Ancient Constitution' to contemporary debate. This, in the words of Smith, effectively 'bequeathed the medieval past to the visionary and the scholar'.⁵³⁵ These, then, were the contexts in which Carlyle encountered the Saint-Simonian theory of feudalism as an 'organic' era.

In an article entitled 'Historic Survey of German Poetry' (1831), published shortly after his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle attacked the idea that 'the Middle Ages' had been a 'Millennium of Darkness'. In opposition, he asserted that this had in fact been the era in which 'nearly all the inventions and social institutions, whereby we yet live as civilised men, were originated or perfected'.⁵³⁶ As noted above, the Saint-Simonians had sought to rehabilitate the feudal aristocracy, arguing that its members had protected those engaged in peaceful work against external aggression, as part of a system of reciprocal responsibilities and duties. In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle wrote, referring to twelfth-century England:

A Feudal Aristocracy is still alive, in the prime of life; superintending the cultivation of the land, and less consciously the distribution of the produce of the land, the adjustment of the quarrels of the land; judging, soldiering, adjusting; everywhere governing the people, - so that even a Gurth born thrall of Cedric lacks not his due parings of the pigs he tends.⁵³⁷

As Carlyle put it in a manuscript written sometime during the mid-1850s, such aristocrats thus really 'were of heroic faculty, and true manly insight and valour; hating disorder (or Chaos generally), living right (wh^h is order or Cosmos generally); and precious to their fellow creatures

157-162.

534I thus differ from Vida, who puts forward Novalis as an alternative to the Saint-Simonians, arguing that Carlyle was indebted to the former, not the latter. In my opinion, there is no reason why both might not be true (ibid., 157-162).

535Smith, *The Gothic Bequest*, 71-75, 156, 196-197.

536See 'Historic Survey of German Literature' [1831], *CME* III:240-241.

537*Past and Present* [1843], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1912), 63. Gurth and Cedric are characters from Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* (1820). See the Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1906), 28-29, 113-114, 127, 170-188, 301-309, 445-456.

accordingly'.⁵³⁸ In sum, for Carlyle, as one reviewer put it: 'The nobility were in fact superior to the populations beneath them, and had therefore *a right* to govern them. They held their positions on the terms of defending and guiding the State, and in the main they fulfilled their task'.⁵³⁹

As noted above, equally central to the Saint-Simonian concept of the middle ages as an 'organic' era was a rehabilitation of the medieval church. At its height, the Saint-Simonians argued, this had been both a pacific and a meritocratic institution. In his *Lectures on the History of Literature* (1838), Carlyle again opposed common notions of 'darkness, rudeness, and barbarity', arguing that the 'Middle Ages' had in fact presented 'the great phenomenon of belief gaining the victory over unbelief'. In particular, like the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle stressed the meritocratic and pacific character of the medieval church, noting that Hildebrand, 'the son of a poor Tuscan peasant', had risen to the rank of Pope, 'solely by the superior spiritual force that was in him', going on to 'humble a great Emperor at the head of the iron force of Europe'. For Carlyle, this represented 'the spirit of Europe set above the body of Europe, mind triumphant over brute force'.⁵⁴⁰ Five years later, in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle once again stressed the meritocratic nature of the church. Describing the election of Samson as Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, Carlyle remarked that the monks of the abbey, despite being 'superstitious blockheads of the Twelfth Century', had nonetheless 'recognised and laid hold of' the 'fit Governor', who had but 'a maximum of two shillings in his pocket'.⁵⁴¹ Moreover, following his election, one 'of the first Herculean Labours Abbot Samson undertook, was to institute a review and radical reform of his economics', this being 'the first labour of every governing man'.⁵⁴² According to Carlyle, Samson was thus 'all along a busy working man', building 'many useful, many pious edifices; human dwellings, churches, church-steeple, barns'.⁵⁴³ Further underlining the pacific nature of the church, Carlyle remarked: 'Admirable was that of the old Monks, "*Laborare est Orare*, Work is Worship"'.⁵⁴⁴ Several years later, in a *Latter-Day Pamphlet* entitled 'The New Downing Street (Apr. 1850), Carlyle once again reiterated the Saint-Simonians' portrayal of the medieval church as a rigorous meritocracy. He declaimed:

How, like an immense mine-shaft through the dim oppressed strata of society, this Institution

538'Long rows of them (Aristocr. Genealogies in History)' [mid-1850s], ed. Trela, in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 5 (1984), 37-38.

539'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (175-179).

540*Lectures on the History of Literature*, 58-60, 69-72.

541*Past and Present*, 82-83.

542*Past and Present*, 88. See also 85.

543*Past and Present*, 113-114.

544*Past and Present*, 193-194. On Carlyle's sources, see Linda Georgiana, 'Carlyle and Jocelin of Brakelond: A Chronicle Revisited', in *Browning Institute Studies*, 8 (1980), 106-107.

of the Priesthood ran; opening, from the lowest depths towards all heights and towards Heaven itself, a free road of egress and emergence towards virtuous nobleness, heroism and well-doing, for every born man. This we may call the living lungs and blood-circulation of those old Feudalisms.⁵⁴⁵

As one sympathetic reviewer of the *Pamphlets* explained, Carlyle thus considered 'the Catholic Church of the middle ages to have been... the animating soul and breathing "lungs" of a vast society for upwards of a thousand years, the prolific source of the highest virtue, of boundless heroic effort, and the noblest and fairest fruits'.⁵⁴⁶ However, other commentators were not so sympathetic. In a review of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* published the same month, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels complained that Carlyle's writings were marred by an 'unhistorical apotheosis of the middle ages', and a 'dilapidated, dumbed-down Saint-Simonism'.⁵⁴⁷ No doubt, Carlyle's portrayal of the middle ages as an 'organic' era was 'unhistorical'. However, as the following section will suggest, Carlyle, like the Saint-Simonians, was not seeking after strict historical truth, but rather attempting to teach a lesson to his readers by example.

MAGISTRA VITAE

As noted above, the young Carlyle had expressed considerable sympathy with the classical understanding of history as *magistra vitae*, or 'teacher of life'. On this understanding, the purpose of history was to delineate the lives and deeds of virtuous statesmen, for the instruction and edification of readers. Indeed, one of Carlyle's concerns regarding more recent narratives of linear progress, such as that associated with the 'Scottish Enlightenment', was that they risked stripping history of its didactic role. In this section, it will be argued that the Saint-Simonian idea of alternating 'organic' and 'critical' eras enabled Carlyle to reconcile 'history as *magistra vitae*' with 'history as progress'. In particular, in keeping with the writings of the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle suggested that the 'organic' institutions of the middle ages might provide an example for the 'organic' industrialism of the

545'The New Downing Street' [Apr. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter*, Copyright edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1897), 128.

546'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (175-179).

547Marx and Engels, review of 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung, politisch-ökonomische Revue* (4th Apr. 1850), 17-30 (17-18, 24). 'in allen diesen Schriften hangt die Kritik der Gegenwart eng zusammen mit einer seltsam unhistorischen Apotheose des Mittelalters... Die ganze Anschauung des historischen Entwicklungsprozesses verflacht sich... zu einen unendlich verkommenen und banalisierten Saint-Simonismus'.

future.⁵⁴⁸ Within months of his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle wrote, in an article entitled 'On History' (Nov. 1830):

Let us search more and more into the Past; let all men explore it, as the true fountain of knowledge; by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at.⁵⁴⁹

Even after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, the classical language of history as *magistra vitae* continued to resonate in Carlyle's writings. For instance, in 1832, Carlyle claimed that the 'great man' of the past might stand as a 'new lesson and monition' to 'every new generation', on the condition that his life be rewritten and reinterpreted 'in the dialect of new times'.⁵⁵⁰ Similarly, in 'Quae Cogitavit' (1833), Carlyle wrote that 'History' was the 'Letter of Instructions', 'a mournful Book of Virtues Lost; of noble men, doing, and daring, and enduring'.⁵⁵¹ Four years later, in 'Mirabeau' (1837), Carlyle underlined the usefulness of biography, asking his readers:

Consider whether it was not, from the first, by example, or say rather by human exemplars, and such reverent imitation or abhorrent aversion and avoidance as these gave rise to, that man's duties were made indubitable to him?⁵⁵²

Thus, Carlyle's youthful faith in the classical notion of history as *magistra vitae*, or 'teacher of life', clearly remained intact. In this sense, Carlyle's lectures *On Heroes* (delivered in 1840), upon which commentators have laid so much stress, were in fact far from original, being, to a large extent, little more than a striking recapitulation of much older understandings of history's didactic role. As one reviewer put it, 'hero-worship' was not 'unbroken ground', being continuous with 'Lives of eminent Statesmen', 'Books of Martyrs', and 'Histories of the Church, or of Nations'.⁵⁵³ In his private correspondence, Carlyle himself acknowledged the classical precedents of his thought. In a letter written the same year as the lectures were delivered, he referred to Plutarch's *Lives of Noble Greeks and Romans*, advising his correspondent:

548As Philip Rosenberg correctly notes, Carlyle thus used the past for 'heuristic purposes' (*The Seventh Hero: Thomas Carlyle and the Theory of Radical Activism* [Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974], 151).

549'On History' [Nov. 1830], *CME* II:258.

550'Boswell's Life of Johnson' [1832], in *CME* IV:90-91.

551'Quae Cogitavit' in *Fraser's Magazine*, VII (May 1833), 585, 588.

552'Mirabeau' [1837], in *CME* V:202-203.

553William Thomson, review of *On Heroes*, in the *Christian Remembrancer*, VI (Aug. 1843), 122.

“Ask of the Dead,” says Plutarch's old oracle: Inquire and see how the Noble and the True, your Brethren of other countries and ages, led their Life; learn in many ways to lead your own thereby!⁵⁵⁴

So far, this was fairly standard classical fare. However, the Saint-Simonian concept of the middle ages as an 'organic' era introduced a novel aspect into Carlyle's thought, insofar as it allowed him to present as examples not only individuals, but also an entire historical era. This was particularly clear in *Past and Present* (1843), where Carlyle presented the institutions of 'the hard, organic, but limited Feudal Ages' as a model for the 'immense Industrial Ages, as yet all inorganic'.⁵⁵⁵ In this sense, his aim was, as he explained, to 'from the Past, in a circuitous way, illustrate the Present and the Future'.⁵⁵⁶ As one reviewer made clear, Carlyle's intention in *Past and Present* was thus primarily didactic:

Mr. Carlyle... admires the spirit of many of the ancient barons, and finds much to applaud in the faith and institutions of the past. He brings up a scene of the twelfth century, not for any paradisaical aspect of it, but to show how, the *right man* holding the helm, the ship of state (or monastery) can be steered safely through a troubled sea.⁵⁵⁷

Moreover, this was no less true of Carlyle's subsequent historical writings. As Blair Worden has recently pointed out, Carlyle, in *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), sought to portray 'the Puritan leaders as a continuation of the feudal ideal'.⁵⁵⁸ Again, as with *Past and Present*, the intention was not to call for a return to the Puritan era, but rather to draw from it inspiration for the present and the future. Placing a similar emphasis on the didactic role of history, Carlyle claimed that 'there is Historical instruction in these Letters' the latter being 'profitable for reproof; for encouragement, for building up in manful purposes and works'.⁵⁵⁹ Some years later, in his preface to *Frederick the Great* (1858), Carlyle argued that 'the question of questions' was,

What part of that exploded Past, the ruins and dust of which still darken all the air, will continually gravitate back to us; be reshaped, transformed, readapted, so that, in new figures,

⁵⁵⁴TC to Geraldine E. Jewsbury, 30th Nov. 1840, CL 12:337-338.

⁵⁵⁵*Past and Present*, 239.

⁵⁵⁶*Past and Present*, 37.

⁵⁵⁷'Carlyle's Past and Present', in *New Englander and Yale Review*, 2 (Jan. 1844), 25-39 (33).

⁵⁵⁸Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Penguin, 2002), 277-278.

⁵⁵⁹*Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches: With Elucidations* [1845], original three volumes reprinted in one (London: Ward Lock & Co. Ltd, n.d.), 60-61.

under new conditions, it may enrich and nourish us again?⁵⁶⁰

In a later volume of *Frederick*, Carlyle answered this question himself, suggesting that the deeds of Frederick might provide inspiration for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. He wrote:

Friedrich is full of these thoughts, among his other Industrialisms... His labours by all methods to awaken new branches of industry, to cherish and further the old, are incessant, manifold, unwearied... One day, these things will deserve to be studied to the bottom; and to be set forth, by writing hands that are competent, for the instruction and example of Workers, - that is to say, of all men, Kings most of all, when there are again Kings.⁵⁶¹

Thus, the Saint-Simonian concept of the middle ages as an 'organic' era allowed Carlyle to renovate the classical idea of history as *magistra vitae*, extending it from the study of individuals to the study of eras. In particular, Carlyle argued, the institutions and practices of the medieval past might, if correctly understood, serve as guidelines for those of the industrial future. However, this was very different from wishing to actually return to the middle ages, an accusation which Carlyle, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, has frequently faced. As the following section will make clear, Carlyle believed that the institutions of the middle ages, for all their virtues, had long since fallen into an irreversible decrepitude, having been outstripped by the rise of industry.

INDUSTRY AS PROGRESS: THE END OF AN 'ORGANIC' ERA

As noted above, the Saint-Simonians had stated that 'the future' would 'differ from the previous organic era, from Christianity, particularly in its *industrial* development'.⁵⁶² According to the Saint-Simonians, medieval institutions had ultimately failed to accommodate the rise of *industrie*, eventually becoming a burden and an obstacle to the latter. For this reason, they had rightly been overthrown, in the course of a 'critical' era that culminated in the French Revolution. Indeed, it

⁵⁶⁰*History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* [1858-1865], Copyright edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), I:13-14.

⁵⁶¹*Frederick the Great*, VI:222-228. On Frederick's 'industrial' reforms, see Florian Schui, *Early Debates About Industry: Voltaire and His Contemporaries* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), ch. 2. In a manuscript written in October 1855, Carlyle had described James V of Scotland: 'resolutely scanning, in the remotest nooks, and Hebridian sounds and bays, these capabilities of his poor country, and practically went to encourage fisheries linen-trades and we will hope higher things in said country' ("The Guises" [Oct. 1855], ed. Tarr, in *Victorian Studies*, 25:1 [1981], 16-18).

⁵⁶²*Religion Saint-Simonienne. Réunion Générale de la Famille. Séances des 19. et 21. Novembre 1831. Suivis par Note sur le Mariage et le Divorce; Lue au Collège de la Religion Saint-Simonienne, le 17. octobre, par le Père Rodriguès* (Paris: Éverat, 1831), 9.

seems likely that this Saint-Simonian theory of industry as progress would have dovetailed with the 'Scottish Enlightenment' narrative of a transition from 'feudalism' to 'commerce', which, as we have seen, the young Carlyle was already familiar. Shortly after his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle, in an article entitled 'Early German Literature' (1831), wrote of the 'wane' of 'Chivalry', the latter giving way to 'a more and more widening controversy'. Amidst this 'prosaic discord', only 'the unmusical sounds of labour and effort' were 'audible'.⁵⁶³ Continuing, Carlyle explained:

when every pitiful Baron claimed to an independent potentate, and exercised his divine right of peace and war too often in plundering the industrious Burgher, public Law could no longer vindicate the weak against the strong... Not till industry and social cultivation had everywhere spread, and risen supreme, could that brood, in detail, be extirpated or tamed.⁵⁶⁴

Several years later, Carlyle reiterated this argument in an article entitled 'Mirabeau' (1837). Here, he claimed that in *ancien régime* France, 'the old Captains of Industry (named Higher Classes, *Ricos Hombres*, Aristocracies and the like)' had 'dwindle[d] more and more into Captains of Idleness'.⁵⁶⁵ Similarly, in the introductory passages of *The French Revolution*, published the same year, Carlyle stated that the 'nobles' had 'nearly ceased either to guide or misguide', and had thus become 'little more than ornamental figures'. The 'flock', he added, was no longer 'tended', being 'only regularly shorn'.⁵⁶⁶ Moreover, like the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle claimed that while the French ruling classes had once served a useful purpose, they had since been superseded through the rise of industry. He wrote:

Once these Chivalry *Duces*... did actually *lead* the world, - were it only towards battle-spoil, where lay the world's best wages then... But now, when so many Looms, improved Ploughshares, Steam-Engines, and Bills of Exchange have been invented... what mean these goldmantled Chivalry Figures, walking there 'in black velvet cloaks', in high-plumed 'hats of a feudal cut?' Reeds shaken in the wind!⁵⁶⁷

The thrust of Carlyle's argument in the *French Revolution* was well summed up by one reviewer, who wrote:

⁵⁶³'Early German Literature' [1831], in *CME* III:168-171.

⁵⁶⁴'Early German Literature', 197.

⁵⁶⁵'Mirabeau' [1837], in *CME* V:223.

⁵⁶⁶*The French Revolution* [1837], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1906), I:10-11.

⁵⁶⁷*The French Revolution*, I:117-118.

Nearly all the land of France was owned by the church and state aristocracy... The hereditary representatives of the old feudal lords, they possessed neither the chivalry, ability, justice, nor benevolence of their ancestors... Their position was the more offensive and despicable in the eyes of the nation, from the fact, that the *nation itself* had so changed. France had become densely populated; commerce had enriched thousands of the middling classes, and quickened the springs of industry throughout the land.⁵⁶⁸

The following year, in 1838, Carlyle made a similar point regarding the medieval church, claiming that by the 'sixteenth century it had become the fixed idea of all intelligent men, followers of manful and honourable views, that priests and monks were an indolent, useless race who only set themselves against what conduced to human improvement in all departments'.⁵⁶⁹ In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle described the decadence of the once beneficent nobility, writing that 'Aristocracy' had 'become Phantasm-Aristocracy', 'totally careless to *do* its work; careful only to clamour for the *wages* of doing its work'.⁵⁷⁰ Thus, as one reviewer pointed out, while Carlyle looked 'upon the middle age of Western Europe, with its Feudal body and Catholic soul, to have been the greatest realized ideal ever yet attained', he nonetheless believed it have since become 'corrupt and selfish', 'aristocracies' having grown 'faithless to their duties'.⁵⁷¹ Moreover, in a manuscript written the same year as *Past and Present*, Carlyle again reiterated the Saint-Simonian argument that the institutions of the middle ages had been rendered obsolete by the rise of industry. Here, he noted that 'the king's Peers that used to sit in Westminster are now by no means the only Vice-kings in this Britain. Fighting has given place to trading, ploughing, weaving and merchant adventuring'.⁵⁷² Moreover, according to Carlyle, the medieval church, for all its virtues, also had clear limitations:

Psalms and Litanies being everywhere chanted to the utmost perfection, there will remain yet innumerable things to do, cotton to be spun in Lancashire, for instance, grain to grow in the Lothians, and much else! Everywhere cities are to be built, swamps to be drained, and wastes to be irrigated, savage tribes and places to be drilled and tilled, whole continents to become green, fruitful with life and traffic. The Heathen element... ought withal to assert

568'Carlyle's Past and Present', in *New Englander and Yale Review*, 2 (Jan. 1844), 25-39 (30-31). Though the review was occasioned by *Past and Present*, the reviewer is here referring to *The French Revolution*.

569*Lectures on the History of Literature*, 125.

570*Past and Present*, 135.

571'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (175-179). The reviewer is here referring to *Past and Present*.

572*Historical Sketches of Notable Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I. and Charles I.* [written Oct. 1843 – early 1844], ed. Alexander Carlyle (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899), 185-187.

itself, and will.⁵⁷³

Shortly thereafter, in *Cromwell* (1845), Carlyle qualified his admiration for the Puritans in similar terms, writing:

Why Puritanism could not continue? My friend, Puritanism was not the Complete Theory of this immense Universe; no, only a part thereof! To me it seems, in my hours of hope, as if the Destinies meant something grander with England than even Oliver Protector did!

Continuing, Carlyle predicted that after 'Two-hundred Years' of 'Cotton-spinning, Coal-boring, Commercing, and other valuable Sincerity of Work', the English would one day 'awaken, and find ourselves in a world greatly *widened*'.⁵⁷⁴ As one reviewer of *Cromwell* pointed out, the idea was thus not to 'rest *in*' Cromwell, but rather 'to look *beyond* him'. Having cited the above passage ('a world greatly *widened*'), the reviewer then added: 'The italics are Mr. Carlyle's, not ours, and thus, in many words, he states what we have stated a hundred times in few: - There *is* human Progress socially as well as individually'.⁵⁷⁵

Indeed, it was this insistence upon industrial progress, and conviction that traditional institutions had been rendered obsolete by the latter, that separated Carlyle from real 'Tories', such as Coleridge and Southey. Unlike the latter, Carlyle had no faith whatsoever in the ability of the established church and landed aristocracy to adapt to new conditions. As Carlyle wrote to his brother in 1833: 'The Tories may drink hemlock when they please, for they are extin[ct] not to be reillumed'.⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, three years later, Carlyle poured scorn upon 'shovelhatted Coleridgian moonshine', a reference to the latter's faith in the Church of England.⁵⁷⁷ Following the publication of *The French Revolution* (1837), which had unequivocally endorsed the sweeping away of the *ancien régime*, Carlyle noted a meeting with Southey in his journal, remarking: 'Very strange I should be *toleratus* and *laudatus* with *him*'.⁵⁷⁸ Indeed, the best riposte to those historians who continue to label Carlyle a 'Tory' and a 'conservative' might be the following words, written by Carlyle to his mother in 1840:

⁵⁷³*Historical Sketches*, 279-280.

⁵⁷⁴*Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches*, 763.

⁵⁷⁵"Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle", in *The Athenæum*, no. 945 (6th Dec. 1845), 1165-1167 (1165).

⁵⁷⁶TC to John A. Carlyle, 8th Jan. 1833, *CL* 6:292.

⁵⁷⁷TC and Jane Welsh Carlyle to John A. Carlyle, 23rd Feb. 1836, *CL* 8:307.

⁵⁷⁸Note to journal dated 13th April 1838, cited *CL* 10:60.

Considerable reviewing of *Chartism* still goes on; but very *daft* reviewing... regret very much that I am - a Tory! Stranger Tory, in my opinion, has not been fallen in with in these latter generations.⁵⁷⁹

Over subsequent years, Carlyle continued to heap ridicule on attempts to revive the institutions of the medieval past. For instance, in his preface to Emerson's *Essays* (1841), he claimed that 'in England as elsewhere old dialects and formulas are mostly lying dead', adding that not even 'the skillfullest *galvanizing*' would 'make them any more live', 'for they are dead'. In this regard, Carlyle reserved particular contempt for the Anglo-Catholic 'Oxford Movement', referring to 'galvanic Puseyisms' and 'dancings of the sheeted dead'.⁵⁸⁰ Two years later, in 1843, Carlyle again repeated this point, writing:

How many interesting Neo-Catholic, Puseyite, and other pluperfect persons, like zealous officers of a spiritual Humane Society, one beholds struggling, with breathless, half-frantic assiduity, with surgical bellows, hot-cloth friction, and galvanic apparatus, to restore you some vital spark which has irrevocably fled! Alas, friends, the dead horse will never kick again, except galvanically.⁵⁸¹

The same year, Carlyle responded to 'Young England' (a group of Tory aristocrats who sought to reinvigorate the established church and landed nobility) in similar terms, explaining that the point was to draw inspiration from the past, not to return to it. He wrote:

On the whole, *if* Young England would... honestly recognising what was dead, and leaving the dead to bury that, address itself frankly to the magnificent but as yet chaotic and appalling Future, in the *spirit* of the Past and Present; telling men at every turn that it knew and saw forever clearly the *body* of the Past to be dead (and even to be damnable if it pretended still to be alive, and go about in a galvanic State), - what achievements might not Young England perhaps manage for us!⁵⁸²

579TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 23rd Jan. 1840, *CL* 12:21. For instance, in an article entitled 'Carlyle on Chartism', in *Monthly Review*, 151 (Feb. 1840), 243-253 (246), it was stated: 'He is understood to be a conservative, a Tory'.

Similarly, in 'Carlyle's Chartism', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (1840), 115-120 (115-116), the reviewer wrote: 'his actual faith, as revealed through mists and clouds, approximates as nearly to Toryism of a new type - to a kind of Utopian Toryism'.

580'Preface' to Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays* (London: James Fraser, 1841), v-xiii (xi-xii).

581*Historical Sketches*, 65.

582TC to Richard Monckton Milnes, 17th Mar. 1844, *CL* 17:312. This point is well made by Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 99-100, 182.

As one French reviewer put it in 1846, Carlyle thus did not 'fear to step beyond the bounds of the Constitutional Settlement of 1688 and the 39 Articles of the Established Church', seeking instead to discover 'the new foundations on which society will be reconstructed'.⁵⁸³ Five years later, in the *Life of John Sterling* (1851), Carlyle argued that the 1832 Reform Act had been inevitable, as a means to rid the world of 'Old hidebound Toryism, long recognized by all the world, and now at last obliged to recognize its very self, for an overgrown Imposture'.⁵⁸⁴ And, finally, in *Frederick the Great* (1858-1865), Carlyle exclaimed:

It is very wrong to keep Enchanted Wiggeries sitting in this world, as if they were things still alive! By a species of "conservatism," which gets praised in our Time, but which is only a slothful cowardice... men now extensively practise this method of procedure... no matter what lovely things they were, and still affect to be, the brains being out, they actually ought in all cases to die, and with their best speed get buried.⁵⁸⁵

Indeed, as the term 'Enchanted Wiggeries' suggests, this was perhaps also a reference to the by-then conventional 'Whig wisdom' of continuity-in-change, according to which piecemeal reform of the 'English Constitution' would allow traditional institutions to keep pace with the progress of commerce.⁵⁸⁶ In sum, Carlyle, despite his admiration for the 'organic' institutions of the medieval past, believed that these had since been rendered defunct by the rise of industry, and could thus never be reformed, rehabilitated, or reclaimed. To the contrary, their destruction would be an integral aspect of a 'critical' era, which would serve to prepare the 'organic' industrialism of the future. Thus, as Carlyle put it in *Past and Present*, the time had come to 'quit this of the hard, organic, but limited Feudal Ages' and to 'glance timidly into the immense Industrial Ages, as yet all inorganic'.⁵⁸⁷

THE WRITING OF MODERN HISTORY: INDUSTRY, SOCIETY, AND MANNERS

In his lectures *On Heroes* (delivered in 1840), Carlyle made abundantly clear that he was a progressive, rather than a conservative, historical thinker. Regarding 'Progress of the Species', he

⁵⁸³'Antoine Dilmans' [Joseph Antoine Milsand], 'Thomas Carlyle', in *La Revue Indépendante* (25th Sep. 1846), 122.

⁵⁸⁴*The Life of John Sterling* [1851], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 53.

⁵⁸⁵*Frederick the Great*, IV:244.

⁵⁸⁶See Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, ch. 10, Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 21-35, 55-57, and Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals*, 29, 37-41. This subject will be addressed in greater detail in chapter 3.

⁵⁸⁷*Past and Present*, 239.

remarked

The talk on that subject is too often of the most extravagant, confused sort. Yet I may say, the fact itself seems certain enough; nay we can trace-out the inevitable necessity of it in the nature of things. Every man... is not only a learner, but a doer: he learns with the mind given him what has been; but with the same mind he discovers farther, he invents and devises somewhat of his own.⁵⁸⁸

Indeed, for Carlyle, the primary task of the historian of modern times was to chronicle this progressive accumulation of work. As noted earlier in this chapter, the young Carlyle had responded favourably to the attempts of 'Scottish Enlightenment' historians to break with the elite political history of the past, and to broaden their scope of inquiry to 'society', 'manners', 'opinion', and so on. In this section, it will be suggested that, despite his persistent denigration of these historians, and vehement protestations of originality, Carlyle in fact owed far more to them than he would have cared to admit. In particular, it will be argued that Saint-Simonian notions of *industrie* enabled Carlyle to extend the 'Scottish Enlightenment' understanding of 'society' and 'manners' into the history of work and workers.⁵⁸⁹

Shortly after his initial encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle wrote in his notebook that Sir Walter Scott's *History of Scotland* (1829-1830) amounted to little more than:

A series of Palace intrigues, and butcheries and battles little more important than those of Donnybrook Fair; all the while that Scotland, quite unnoticed, is holding on her course in Industry, in Arts, in Culture.⁵⁹⁰

Indeed, this is little different to the statements that Carlyle had made during the early 1820s, and was entirely in keeping with the 'Scottish Enlightenment' commitment to 'society'. However, over the coming years, Carlyle increasingly attempted to pass such ideas off as his own. This was particularly clear in an article entitled 'Boswell's Life of Johnson' (1832), in which he launched an

588 *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 119.

589 There is thus much truth to Billie Melman's recent claim that Carlyle's historical writings offered a sort of panoramic 'people's history from above' (*The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past, 1800-1953* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], ch. 2, here p. 78).

590 Journal entry dated 7th Sep. 1830, in *Two Notebooks*, 168-169. Two months later, Carlyle wrote: 'Which was the greatest innovator, which was the more important personage in man's history, he who first led armies over the Alps... or the nameless boor who first hammered out for himself an iron spade?' ('On History' [Nov. 1830], in *CME*, II:256).

attack on William Robertson's *The History of Scotland* (1759). As Karen O'Brien has shown, Robertson, in his *History*, had portrayed Mary Queen of Scots in highly 'sentimental' terms, in sum, as an archetype of overemotional, incompetent femininity. In doing so, he was attempting to neutralise her force as a political symbol, which might serve as a rallying point for those who sought to lead Scotland back to its feudal past.⁵⁹¹ In 'Boswell's Life of Johnson', Carlyle zeroed in on these passages, insinuating that Robertson's *History* was thus little more than a 'Scandalous Chronicle of two persons: Mary Stuart, a Beauty, but over lightheaded; and [her second husband] Henry Darnley, a Booby, who had fine legs'. He then predicted that:

The time is approaching when History will be attempted on quite other principles; when the Court, the Senate, and Battlefield, receding more and more into the background, the Temple, the Workshop, and Social Hearth, will advance more and more into the foreground.⁵⁹²

This was hardly fair to Robertson, or to other 'Scottish Enlightenment' historians, for whom such ideas had in fact been commonplace. However, despite such exaggerated claims, Carlyle, following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, does seem to have made an original contribution to historical writing, substituting for the 'Scottish Enlightenment' notion of 'society' a more specific emphasis on 'work'. For instance, in the *French Revolution* (1837), Carlyle lamented that 'foolish History' dedicated itself to:

Attila Invasions, Walter-the-Penniless Crusades, Sicilian Vespers, Thirty-Years' Wars: mere sin and misery: not work, but hindrance of work! For the Earth, all this while, was yearly green and yellow with her kind harvests; the hand of the craftsman, the mind of the thinker rested not: and so, after all and in spite of all, we have this so glorious high-domed blossoming World; concerning which, poor History may well ask with wonder, Whence *it* came? ⁵⁹³

What was particularly striking in Carlyle's historical writings was the great vividness and immediacy of his portrayals of work.⁵⁹⁴ In 'Chartism' (1839), Carlyle argued that the true history of

⁵⁹¹O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment*, 114-122. On Enlightenment historians' use of sentiment and irony as dimensions of historical distancing, see also Mark Salber Phillips, 'Historical distance and the historiography of eighteenth-century Britain', in *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, ed. Collini, Whatmore and Young (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 31-47 (36-38).

⁵⁹²'Boswell's Life of Johnson' [1832], in *CME* IV:83-85. See also *Sartor Resartus*, 37-38, 92.

⁵⁹³*The French Revolution* [1837], I:22-23.

⁵⁹⁴John D. Rosenberg rightly remarks upon 'Carlyle's power of endowing the past with extraordinary presence' (*Carlyle and the Burden of History* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 24-27).

England consisted not in 'obscure fighting', but rather in 'forests felled, bogs drained, fields made arable, towns built'.⁵⁹⁵ He wrote:

This Nation now has cities and seedfields, has spring-vans, dray-waggons, Long-acre carriages, nay railway trains; has coined money, exchange-bills, laws, books, war-fleets, spinning jennies, warehouses and West-India Docks: see what it has built and done, what it can and will yet build and do! These umbrageous pleasure-woods, green meadows, shaven stubble-fields, smooth-sweeping roads; these high-domed cities, and what they hold and bear... what work has it not cost? How many brawny arms, generation after generation, sank down wearied; how many noble hearts, toiling while life lasted, and wise heads that wore themselves dim with scanning and discerning, before this waste *White-cliff*, Albion so-called... became a British Empire! ⁵⁹⁶

Similarly, later in 'Chartism', Carlyle described the 'Saxon kindred' bursting 'forth into cotton-spinning, cloth-cropping, iron-forging, steamengining, railwaying, commercing and careering towards all the winds of Heaven'.⁵⁹⁷ Commenting upon these passages, one reviewer remarked: 'Seldom have we read any thing so beautifully eloquent, combining the interest of history with the sagacity of political philosophy, as the chapter headed New Eras, in which... Mr. Carlyle follows the development of the British energy, and freedom, from the landing of the Saxons to the present age'.⁵⁹⁸ Indeed, this understanding of progress as an accumulation of work seems to have become engrained in Carlyle's mind. Visiting Bruges in 1842, he wrote in his journal:

Honour to the long-forgotten generations; they have done *something* in their time: this city, nay this country is a work of theirs. Sand downs and stagnating marshes, producing nothing but heath, but sedges, docks, marsh-mallows and misamata: so it lay by nature; but the industry of man, the assiduous, unwearied motion of how many spades, pickaxes, hammers, wheelbarrows, mason-trowels, and ten-thousandfold industrial tools have made it – this! A thing that will grow corn, potherbs, warehouses, Rubens Pictures, Churches and Cathedrals.⁵⁹⁹

The following year, in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle returned to this theme. Here, he once again

⁵⁹⁵'Chartism', in *CME* VI:157-158.

⁵⁹⁶'Chartism', 156-157.

⁵⁹⁷'Chartism', 168.

⁵⁹⁸'The Works of Thomas Carlyle', in *The Eclectic Review*, XVII (Apr. 1845), 377-399 (383).

⁵⁹⁹'Notes of a Three-Days' Tour to the Netherlands' [Aug. 1842], in *Cornhill Magazine*, 53 (1922), 506.

insisted that the true history of England lay not in high politics or war, but rather in the struggles of all those who had worked there, either with hand or head:

This Land of England has its conquerors, possessors, which change from epoch to epoch, from day to day; but its real conquerors, creators, and eternal proprietors are these following, and their representatives if you can find them: All the Heroic Souls that ever were in England, each in their degree; all the men that ever cut a thistle, drained a puddle out of England, contrived a wise scheme in England, did or said a true and valiant thing in England... The quantity of done and forgotten work that lies silent under my feet in this world, and escorts and attends me, and supports and keeps me alive, wheresoever I walk or stand, whatsoever I think or do, gives rise to reflections!⁶⁰⁰

As one reviewer remarked, there was thus only one thing that Carlyle 'honor[ed] in England – the labor which has made her physically great. This in itself he thinks noble'.⁶⁰¹ For his part, Ralph Waldo Emerson drew attention to the sheer vividness of Carlyle's depictions of work, suggesting that these represented the 'first domestication of the modern system', 'the first emergence of all this wealth and labor' into literature.⁶⁰²

Indeed, Carlyle's emphasis on work and workers informed his response to the endeavours of other historians, including Thomas Babington Macaulay. In 1848, Macaulay published the initial volumes of his bestselling *History of England*. As several scholars have noted, Macaulay, despite earlier theoretical statements about the need to widen the scope of history to 'society', remained in practice relentlessly political.⁶⁰³ Shortly after the appearance of the *History*, Carlyle wrote to Lady Ashburton:

I was, if anything, a little disappointed... the Book... [is] *flat*, - flat, like a russian *steppe*... in

⁶⁰⁰*Past and Present*, 128-129. Similarly, in his posthumously published *Historical Sketches* (written 1843-44), Carlyle wrote that 'England withal is producing something else than Duels and Court-Masques'. Having eulogised the builders of London, the weavers of Lancaster and Yorkshire, the cutlers of Sheffield and the merchants and fishermen of Liverpool, he exclaimed, 'what things are growing, under the Whitehall phantasmagory and dead Court-litter!' (78-85, 93). Later on in the same work, Carlyle also gave a remarkably dense and vivid picture of the progress of agriculture (237).

⁶⁰¹'Carlyle's Past and Present', in *New Englander and Yale Review*, 2 (Jan. 1844), 25-39 (35).

⁶⁰²Emerson, 'Past and Present', in *The Dial: a Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion*, IV, no. 1 (July 1843), 96-102 (101-102).

⁶⁰³See, for instance, Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 65-67, Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 26-27, and William Thomas, *The Quarrel of Macaulay and Croker: Politics and History in the Age of Reform* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 249-265. Thomas notes that Macaulay was not a 'Whig' historian in any crude sense, and never subordinated his historical writing to party-political purposes. See ch. 7, and also 306-314.

fine *no story* to be told, and nothing but a *Whig Evangelist* to tell it us! ... The true "History of England,"... will turn out to be very *brief* (I apprehend), and to lie leagues *below* all that.⁶⁰⁴

When read against the backdrop of the above citations from Carlyle's own works, the clear implication of this letter was that Macaulay had failed to do justice to the 'work' that constituted the 'true History of England', remaining at the superficial level of mere politics, diplomacy, and statecraft. Indeed, four years later, in a manuscript dated November 1852, Carlyle gave striking expression to all those qualities which distinguished his own historical writing from that of Macaulay. He wrote:

Be not so much alarmed at the opulences, spiritual or material, of this world. Whether they be of the hand or of the mind, whether consisting of St. Katherine's Docks, blooming cornfields and filled treasuries or of sacred philosophies, theologies, bodies of science, recorded heroisms, and accumulated conquests of wisdom and harmonious human utterance, they have all been amassed by little and little. Poor insignificant transitory bipeds little better than thyself have ant-wise accumulated them all. How inconsiderable was the contribution of each. Yet, working with hand or with head, in the strenuous ardour of their heart, they did what was in them; and here, so magnificent, overwhelming and almost divine and immeasurable, is the summed up result.⁶⁰⁵

In sum, Carlyle's understanding of modern history, and indeed progress, as an accumulation of 'work', can be seen as an extension, or perhaps specification, of earlier 'Scottish Enlightenment' attempts to write the history of 'society'. Moreover, this shift in emphasis occurred subsequent to Carlyle's encounter with the Saint-Simonians, and was thus most likely bound up with their concept of industrialism (as explored in chapter 1). Therefore, despite Carlyle's reputation as a follower of 'German Romanticism', his vivid historical style might well have in fact owed much to influences somewhat closer to home. In the following, final section, it will be suggested that, contrary to received opinion, the increasing prevalence of German historical methods in Britain actually prompted a decline in Carlyle's popularity.

604TC to Lady Ashburton, 29th Jan. 1849, *CL* 23:209. The first two volumes of the *History* were published in 1848, others subsequently.

605'Manuscript on Creeds' [Nov. 1852], ed. Baumgarten, in *Victorian Studies*, 11:4 (1968), 513.

'DRYASDUST'

As noted above, Carlyle, using the Saint-Simonian concept of history as an alternating series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras, sought to reinvigorate the classical understanding of history as *magistra vitae*. In particular, he suggested the the 'organic' institutions of the middle ages might provide a model or example for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. Indeed, Carlyle's style was partly intended to serve as a means to this end. In order for history to play its didactic role effectively, he argued, it would have to be clearly, strikingly, and vividly written. As Carlyle explained in 'Sir Walter Scott' (1838):

faint hearsays of 'philosophy teaching by experience' will have to exchange themselves everywhere for direct inspection and embodiment: this, and this only, will be counted experience.⁶⁰⁶

It was this commitment to history as *magistra vitae*, presenting inspiring examples of virtuous conduct in a clear and vivid style, that underpinned Carlyle's hostility to what he referred to as 'Dryasdust' (a term purloined from Sir Walter Scott).⁶⁰⁷ As Carlyle explained in *Cromwell* (1845):

the Art of History, the grand difference between a Dryasdust and a sacred Poet, is very much even this: To distinguish well what does still reach to the surface, and is alive and frondent for us; and what reaches no longer to the surface, but moulders safe underground, never to send forth leaves or fruit for mankind any more: of the former we shall rejoice to hear; to hear of the latter will be an affliction to us; of the latter only Pedants and Dullards, and disastrous malefactors to the world, will find good to speak.⁶⁰⁸

Thus, for Carlyle, history was intended to serve a didactic purpose, this being what distinguished it from mere 'assiduous Pedantry'.⁶⁰⁹

As one reviewer of *Cromwell* presciently remarked, Carlyle's 'unmeasured contempt for whole

606'Sir Walter Scott' [1838], *CME* VI:72. See also 'Biography' [1832], *CME* IV:53, 60-61, and 'Diamond Necklace' [1837], *CME* V:132-133.

607*Frederick the Great*, I:9. See the introductory 'Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr. Dryasdust, F. A. S.', in *Ivanhoe*.

608*Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches*, 6. In a letter written around the same time, Carlyle claimed to have exhumed Cromwell from 'the guano of two Centuries of Owls' (TC to John Harland, 2nd Sep. 1845, *CL* 19:189). See also 'The Prinzenraub' [1855], *CME* VII:164.

609*Past and Present*, 46.

classes of men, under the designations of flunkeys, man-milliners, and Dry-as-dusts' was unlikely to 'be forgiven by any that conceive themselves particularly aimed at'.⁶¹⁰ Indeed, such a reaction was soon forthcoming, partly as a result of the growing reception of German historical scholarship in Britain from mid-century onward.⁶¹¹ As Ruth apRoberts has shown, the young Carlyle, during the 1820s, had shown a real interest in 'German Historicism', at least as derived 'from Johann Gottfried von Herder' (1774-1803).⁶¹² However, in my opinion, apRoberts's claim that Carlyle's subsequent writings constituted 'the working out of German historicist principles in practice', and that such 'Historicism' amounted in effect to 'cultural relativism', is somewhat exaggerated.⁶¹³ While the young Carlyle might well have shown significant interest in Herder, his sympathies certainly did not extend to later 'German Historicists' such as Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831) and Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886).⁶¹⁴ For instance, in his *Lectures on the History of Literature* (1838), Carlyle had dismissed Niebuhr, whose *Roman History* had recently been translated into English, as a typical antiquarian pedant, who heaped up quotations without drawing useful conclusions, thus vitiating the didactic purpose of history.⁶¹⁵ Moreover, during the composition of *Frederick the Great* (1858-65), Carlyle found himself obliged to engage more deeply with recent German scholarship, particularly the 'Historicism' of Ranke and his disciples.⁶¹⁶ In sum, Carlyle's verdict was that 'the Prussian Dryasdust, otherwise an honest fellow, and not afraid of labour, excels all other Dryasdusts yet known', being little more than a '*Gelehrte Dummkopf*'.⁶¹⁷ Again, as with Niebuhr, Carlyle's objections rested upon the concept of history as *magistra vitae*. In his opinion, German historicists fell far short of this ideal. In *Frederick*, he wrote contemptuously of

610'Cromwell's Letters and Speeches', in *The Westminster Review*, 46:2 (1847), 432-473 (472).

611Burrow points out that German 'historicism' began to win an audience in Britain from around mid-century onwards (*A Liberal Descent*, 120-121 et seq.).

612Ruth apRoberts, *The Ancient Dialect: Thomas Carlyle and Comparative Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 3. One notable example is Carlyle's article on Heyne (1828), one of the pioneers of modern source criticism (ibid., 37-38).

613Ibid., 49, 28-29.

614While the young Carlyle might have drawn some inspiration from German writers such as Lessing, Herder, and Goethe, the latter were neither 'romantics' nor 'historicists', belonging rather to the earlier *Aufklärung*, *Sturm und Drang*, Weimar Classicism, etc.

615*Lectures on the History of Literature*, 39. Niebuhr's translators, Thirlwall and Hare, published their first volume in 1828, and the second in 1832. See Klaus Dockhorn, *Der deutsche Historismus in England* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950), 22. The same year, Carlyle had remarked in conversation that 'the events of history [should] come to us like distant music, which, however harsh & rude, is mellowed into beauty. The errors & mistonations destroy each other, leaving only that which is harmonious & true to live upon the ear' (cited in Ian Campbell, 'Conversations with Carlyle: The Monckton Milnes Diaries', in *Prose Studies*, 8 [1985], 48-57 [53]). This would hardly have satisfied Niebuhr's exacting standards of *Quellenkritik*.

616On the continuities between Niebuhr and Ranke, particularly regarding methods of source criticism, see Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought From Herder to the Present* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), 65, and Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 85-87.

617*Frederick the Great*, I:9, 16.

the Prussian Dryasdust, sitting comfortable in his Academies, waving sublimely his long ears as he tramples human Heroisms into unintelligible pipe-clay and dreary continents of sand and cinders, with the Doctors all applauding.⁶¹⁸

Hyperbole aside, Carlyle may have had a point. In his *History of the Roman and Germanic Peoples* (1824), Ranke had famously written: 'To history has been attributed the office to judge the past and to instruct the present to make its future useful; at such high function this present attempts does not aim – it merely wants to show how things really were'.⁶¹⁹ As Martin Van Gelderen has pointed out, central to such Historicism was the concept of *Wissenschaft* ('science'), understood as an objective body of knowledge, acquired using clear and verifiable methods. Moreover, as Van Gelderen explains, this approach to historical research was bound up with a move away 'from the conception that history should be the *cognito rerum singularium*, the knowledge of past events that at best could help the virtuous and the erudite to learn the moral lessons of life'.⁶²⁰ For this reason, it is perhaps unsurprising that contemporary German reviewers often attacked Ranke for presenting his readers with an undigested mass of facts and details.⁶²¹ Indeed, such an approach to historical writing would hardly have pleased Carlyle, a firm believer in the older understanding of history as *magistra vitae*. Furthermore, according to Ranke, the historian ought to recognise and respect the uniqueness of past eras, each of these being, as Ranke famously put it, equally 'next to God'. However, as Olive Anderson points out, once 'the uniqueness of the past is recognized, deployment of its "lessons" is bound to become less confident'.⁶²² Again, this would not have appealed to Carlyle, who, accordingly, subjected German historicists to an incessant barrage of abuse throughout the ten volumes of *Frederick*.

At least one British reviewer agreed with Carlyle, concurring that 'the Prussian or German Dryasdust excels in dreariness and in absence of method any Dryasdust ever known'. 'The laborious and useful Ranke', the reviewer continued, 'might have been thought to exhaust the art of confusion in his labyrinthian *History of the Popes*, but a reference to his *History of Prussia* will show that German erudition can never be fully appreciated until it is employed on German subjects'.⁶²³ However, many other British reviewers argued that Carlyle had gone too far. To some extent, such

⁶¹⁸*Frederick the Great*, VII:266-267.

⁶¹⁹Cited (in English) by Nadel, 'Philosophy of History Before Historicism', 315.

⁶²⁰Martin van Gelderen, 'Facing the Abyss: Friedrich Meinecke and the Crisis of Historicism', unpublished paper, 3-4.

⁶²¹Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, 69.

⁶²²Olive Anderson, 'The Political Uses of History in Mid Nineteenth-Century England', in *Past & Present*, 36 (1967), 87-105 (88).

⁶²³Carlyle's *History of Frederick II. Second Notice*, in *The Saturday Review* (30th Oct. 1858), 423-425 (423).

commentators believed that Carlyle's expressions of contempt for 'such men as Preuss and Ranke' were simply 'unbecoming', not to mention ungrateful, given that Carlyle had made extensive use of their findings.⁶²⁴ However, most criticism of Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* focused on questions of historical method, and on broader understandings of the scope and purpose of history. As Klaus Dockhorn demonstrated some time ago, German Historicism had begun to gain a foothold in Britain during the 1840s, some 43 works of German scholarship being translated into English over the course of the decade.⁶²⁵ Moreover, the German approach to history was imitated by British writers such as Connop Thirlwall, in his *History of Greece* (1835-44), John Mitchell Kemble, in his *The Saxons in England* (1849), and George Grote, in his own *History of Greece* (1846-56).⁶²⁶ This, then, was the context in which Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* appeared. Remarkably, much British criticism of Carlyle in fact echoed the tenets of German Historicism. In order to fully understand this, it might be useful to begin by looking at what some German historians were writing about Carlyle around this time. In 1858, a review of the first installments of Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, which had been translated into German by his secretary, Joseph Neuberg, appeared in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, a journal which, as Georg Iggers points out, had been founded by the younger disciples of Ranke.⁶²⁷ Here, the reviewer began by stating bluntly: 'what Carlyle writes is not history, but rather rhapsodies about historical figures and conditions'.⁶²⁸ In particular, the reviewer claimed that Carlyle 'resolved history into a series of biographies', the corollary of which was 'insufficient attention' to 'institutions'.⁶²⁹ According to the reviewer, this was a consequence of Carlyle's need to be forever making points and presenting examples, particularly regarding the nature of leadership. The reviewer wrote: 'One perceives that [Carlyle's] opinions are straightforwardly patriarchal: the head of state ought to be a paragon of all the virtues'.⁶³⁰ Such 'opinions', the reviewer continued, 'might be appropriate for an epic poet; but certainly not for a writer of history'.⁶³¹ The following year, another review of Carlyle appeared in the *Historische*

624'Carlyle's History of Frederic the Great', in *The North British Review*, 43 (1865), 79-126 (83).

625Dockhorn, *Der deutsche Historismus in England*, 71-75.

626Ibid., 41-42, 125-130, 48-49.

627Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, 90-91.

628'Carlyle's Friedrich der Große', in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 2 (1858), 542-555 (543).

629'Carlyle's Friedrich der Große', 544. 'Für Carlyle löst sich die Weltgeschichte in eine Reihe von Biographien auf. Die große Persönlichkeit ist ihm Alles, und Hand in Hand damit geht seine geringschätzende Berachtung aller Insitutionen'.

630'Carlyle's Friedrich der Große', 544. 'Man sieht, es ist die einfach patriarchalische Auffassung: das Haupt des Staates soll ein Ausbund aller Tugenden sein'. Despite the fact that the *Preussische Jahrbücher* were edited by the notorious Prussian chauvinist Heinrich von Treitschke, the reviewer suggested that Carlyle had perhaps gone too far in his hagiography (550).

631'Carlyle's Friedrich der Große', 545. 'Diese Auffassung... mag für den Dichter eines Epos die richtige sein: für einen Geschichtschreiber ist sie es sicher nicht' The reviewer added: 'Es ist notorisch, daß Carlyle ein großer Verehrer [of the humorous German writer Jean Paul] ist, und jede Seite seines Buchs zeigt, daß er sich mehr als billig in denselben vertieft hat... weder jene Methode der Excuse, noch der Jean Paul'sche Stil nimmt sich in der Uebertragung auf sie Geschichtschreibung gut aus' (546).

Zeitschrift. Here, the reviewer claimed that although Carlyle had been 'diligent in his researches', he ultimately remained a 'dilettante'. Moreover, the reviewer then deplored Carlyle's attitude towards 'the German "Dryasdust"', writing:

[Carlyle] is neither courteous nor grateful regarding the hard work of his predecessors, and we find several unfriendly remarks flung at meritorious researchers, which it would perhaps have been better to suppress. In particular, it is always somewhat painful when a writer belittles scholarly research before the general public, regardless of how dry or formless this research may be... [what is more] several of [Carlyle's own] errors could have been rectified through perusal of the much despised Dryasdust.⁶³²

In Britain, several reviewers pursued a similar line of criticism, accusing Carlyle of being unprofessional in his methods, and overly attached to an outmoded notion of history as *magistra vitae*. In the *Edinburgh Review*, one commentator came to the defence of German Historicism, writing:

it is by no means true that the Prussian writers and historians are not deserving of praise; they evince a sobriety and a respect for fact in which Mr. Carlyle would have done well to have followed them. Ranke's work is well known. Buchholz is conscientious if somewhat dull; and Voight's history of Prussia is especially worthy of commendation.⁶³³

Moreover, like the reviewer of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, the author also accused Carlyle of having focused excessively on 'his hero', while paying insufficient attention to institutions. 'If this is history', the reviewer concluded, 'Mr. Gilbert A'Beckett's Comic History of England has a claim to the serious perusal of every historical student'.⁶³⁴ Carlyle's book received similarly short shrift in the *British Quarterly Review*. Here, a contributor, like the German reviewers referred to above, accused Carlyle of dilettantism, and of having written more in the vein of an epic poet than a serious historian. He wrote:

632'Macaulay's Friedrich der Große. Mit einem Nachtrag über Carlyle', in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1 (1859), 43-107 (103-104). 'er ist weder höfflich noch dankbar gegen die saure Arbeit dieses Vorgängers, ja wir find auf manche unfreundliche Bemerkung gegen verdiente Forscher gestoßen, die vielleicht besser weggeblieben wäre, insoferne es immer etwas Peinliches hat, wenn der Darsteller für das grosse Publikum die gelehrte Forschung, sei sie auch noch so trocken und formlos, mit Geringschätzung behandelt. Auch ist nicht zu läugnen, daß mancher seine Irrthum aus dem verachteten Dryasdust gut hätte berichtet werden können'.

633'Carlyle's *Frederic the Great*', in, *The Edinburgh Review*, 110 (Oct. 1859), 376-410 (378-379).

634'Carlyle's *Frederic the Great*', in, *The Edinburgh Review*, 110 (Oct. 1859), 376-410 (379-380).

[According to Mr. Carlyle] the only mistake is, that these histories have been written like philosophical treatises, and not sung after the fashion of the old minstrels. Mr. Carlyle would really reproduce, in some respects, the ages of barbarism, by again consigning history to the men who, with harp in hand, tried to hand down some recollection of national traditions by songs, in the absence of printed letters, of authentic documents, or monumental records.⁶³⁵

Another reviewer, writing in the *Westminster*, claimed that what Carlyle had presented was 'too much of a family story', giving little sense of 'the geological structure of the soil, the climate, the character of inhabitants, local communication, and junctures of trade', 'nor of the peculiarities of the races; nor of the economical and social condition of the people and its intellectual life'. Continuing, the reviewer then suggested that Carlyle would have been better advised to have written 'a sketch of the history of Prussian law'. As Dockhorn points out, German *Rechtsgeschichte* had increasingly won an audience in Britain via the works of historians such as Thomas Arnold, and, in the 1860s, would come to even greater prominence through the writings of Sir Henry Maine.⁶³⁶ Bearing witness to this growing interest in the German 'Historical School', the reviewer wrote:

“Jurisprudence is the knowledge of all things divine and human,” teaches the *corpus juris*. That divine idea of justice every man may keep alive within himself; but to read it off those mountains of legislative rubbish, that pretend to be the incarnation of it, requires, indeed, a little knowledge of everything human. For there is nothing in the life of a nation that does not leave an impression on the coeval stratum... The life of a nation is an organism, every part reacts upon every part.⁶³⁷

In sum, despite the received idea that Carlyle was somehow indebted to 'German Historicism', the growing reception of the latter in Britain, from around mid-century onward, in fact prompted a decline in his reputation as a serious historian. Following the lead of German scholars, their British admirers criticised Carlyle for the amateurishness of his research methods, his insufficient attention to institutions, and, perhaps most notably, his dogged attachment to the notion of history as *magistra vitae*. As one British reviewer put it in 1865, the year in which the final volume of Carlyle's *Frederick* came off the presses:

We have no great love for that style of history-writing which is always pointing a moral...

635 'Carlyle's Frederic the Great', in *The British Quarterly Review*, 29 (Jan. 1859), 239-292 (252).

636 Dockhorn, *Der deutsche Historismus in England*, 35-39, 172-176.

637 'Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great', in *The Westminster Review*, 15 (1859), 174-208 (175-178).

We have no inclination to listen to the preaching of others. If Mr. Carlyle would only tell us calmly and truthfully what took place, and then leave us alone!⁶³⁸

Indeed, due to the ever growing influence of 'German Historicism', it seems that Carlyle's reputation as a historian continued to decline over subsequent decades. For instance, by 1873, E. A. Freeman (who, as Dockhorn points out, represented 'the purest form of German Historicism, the *Rankeschule*'),⁶³⁹ could write contemptuously to a correspondent: 'I read a page of Carlyle when I was a scholar, and it seemed such unintelligible rant that I never read any more'.⁶⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

In the opening sections of this chapter, it was argued that the young Carlyle subscribed to the classical understanding of history as *magistra vitae*, and also made use of the idea of history as a *corsi* and *recorsi* of virtue and corruption. These ideas stood in stark contrast to 'Scottish Enlightenment' notions of linear progress, which tended to imply that there was little the moderns might learn from the past. Thus, the young Carlyle's historical thought was marked by a number of tensions or contradictions. The Saint-Simonian concept of historical progress occurring through a series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras perhaps never enabled Carlyle to fully resolve these tensions, but it did allow him to attenuate them somewhat. In particular, the idea of feudalism as an 'organic' era that might serve as a model for the 'organic' industrialism of the future allowed Carlyle to reinvigorate the notion of history as *magistra vitae*. At the same time, the idea of modern history as the ascendancy of industry, outstripping and undermining the institutions of the medieval past, permitted Carlyle to confirm the occurrence of 'progress'. However, as chapters 3 and 4 will suggest, for Carlyle, as for the Saint-Simonians, such industrial 'progress' remained potential, and would only be fully actualised when 'organised', that is, when regulated, guided, and governed, in the same way that the life of the middle ages had been. Thus, in sum, Carlyle's historical thought continued to be marked by significant tensions. However, these were undeniably productive tensions, which prevented him from lapsing into a complacent faith in linear progress (such as that present in the works of Macaulay and Buckle), while also facilitating his attempts to set out a

638'Carlyle's History of Frederic the Great', in *The North British Review*, 43 (1865), 79-126 (96).

639Dockhorn, *Der deutsche Historismus in England*, 141-144.

640E. A. Freeman to J. Bryce, 13th Apr. 1873, in *The Life and Letters of Edward A. Freeman*, ed. W. R. W. Stephens (London: Macmillan & Co., 1895), II:67-68. Two years later, Freeman wrote, regarding Carlyle's *Early Kings of Norway* (1875): 'old Carlyle who, after babbling and blundering for thirty and forty years, [has taken] upon himself to write some nonsense about early Kings of Norway' (Freeman to Rev. Canon Greenwell, 17th Sep. 1875, in *ibid.*, II:95). Similarly, Goldwin Smith, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford (1858-65), wrote of Carlyle's *Cromwell*: 'Carlyle's noble biography runs into poetry, and departs from historic truth. To supply this defect is the proper work of rational criticism' (Goldwin Smith, *Lectures and Essays* [Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1881], 230).

utopian vision of the future.⁶⁴¹

⁶⁴¹For Macaulay, progress was linear, being driven by the development of commerce, an idea that tended to imply a certain political quietism. See for instance Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), ch. 3. Carlyle was no less critical of other linear notions of progress and 'civilisation', which he saw as veiled apologies for existing social arrangements. For instance, in 1859, he remarked sarcastically to Lord Ashburton: 'Why not take *Buckle* and force yourself to sit still, in contemplation of the Progress of civil and religious Liberty all over the world?' (TC to Lord Ashburton, 18th Aug. 1859, *CL* 35:171). Around the same time, Carlyle remarked in conversation: 'Buckle seems to me to be a very well lettered man, but, after all, to belong decidedly to the class of blockheads' (cited in Ian Campbell, 'More Conversations with Carlyle: The Monckton Milnes Diaries: Part 2', in *Prose Studies*, 9 [1986], 22-29 [23]). Reviewing Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, a contributor to *The English Woman's Journal* wrote: 'this is by far the most remarkable book of the autumn season; nay, of the whole year; (forfend us Mr. Buckle!)'. ('Notices of Books – The History of Frederick II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The English Woman's Journal*, vol. III, no. 13 [1st Mar. 1859], 56-63 [56]).

3.

'A crisis which the sooner brings cure':

Democracy, *Laissez-Faire*, and the 'Condition-of-England Question'



William Edward Kilburn, 'View of the Great Chartist Meeting on Kennington Common' (1848)

INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, Carlyle has erroneously been labelled a 'conservative' or 'Tory', often with regard to his philosophy of history. Furthermore, such misunderstandings have frequently spilled over into assessments of his views on contemporary politics. John Burrow, for instance, has ranked Carlyle alongside Southey, Coleridge, and other 'Romantics and traditionalists and advocates of patriarchal social order', while Michael Levin refers to Carlyle's 'anti-

parliamentarism', claiming that he opposed 'democracy'.⁶⁴² In contrast, this chapter will argue that Carlyle's views need to be understood in the context of the Saint-Simonian theory of history as a series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. As the previous chapter has suggested, Carlyle believed that the institutions of the middle ages, the most recent 'organic' era, had long since fallen into obsolescence, having failed to accommodate the rise of industry. For this reason, and contrary to the claims of many commentators, Carlyle in fact endorsed *laissez-faire* and democracy, arguing that these played an indispensable 'critical' role, clearing away the wreckage of the past, and preparing the way for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. However, while he considered them valid as a means, he did not endorse them as ends in themselves. Arguing that *laissez-faire* and democracy had already served their 'critical' purpose, Carlyle claimed that, if allowed to continue indefinitely, they would result in an ever-deepening anarchy and chaos. Central to Carlyle's concerns was what he famously termed the 'Condition-of-England question', or 'Condition of the Working Classes of England'. According to Carlyle, the dynamics of *laissez-faire*, and particularly competition, reduced the labouring classes to a state of dependence, morally degrading them in the process. Given that such problems stemmed from the inner logic of the market itself, democratic and other constitutional reforms would avail little against them. In making this argument, Carlyle took on the prevailing wisdom of Whigs, Radicals, and Chartists alike, all of whom continued to believe that political reform might provide a palliative to economic ills. However, as will be seen, the Chartists were increasingly won over by Carlyle's arguments, which provided them with an important resource in moving towards a more socialist, class-based analysis of British society. Indeed, by the time of the 1848 revolutions, an increasing confluence of Carlylian, Chartist, and Owenite discourses was occurring, something which has been overlooked in the existing secondary literature. As noted in the introduction, this also suggests that Carlyle's contribution to the formation of early British socialism in fact began far earlier than has hitherto been assumed. Finally, this chapter will also explore the ways in which Carlyle buttressed his critique of the shortcomings of democracy through reference to Plato, resulting in something akin to a Platonised Saint-Simonism.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴²Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 59; Levin, *The Condition of England Question: Carlyle, Mill, Engels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 49-52, 61.

⁶⁴³One final caveat: this chapter will not deal with the solutions that Carlyle proposed, these being reserved to the subsequent chapter.

I.

FROM YOUTHFUL RADICALISM TO DOUBTS ABOUT DEMOCRACY (1815-1830)

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Carlyle has often been portrayed as a conservative and reactionary. However, in his *Reminiscences*, Carlyle recalled that during his youth, he and his friends 'were all Radicals at heart'.⁶⁴⁴ Indeed, Carlyle's early correspondence was written through with the common-places of Radical discourse, particularly an opposition to the oligarchic, Hanoverian state, and a conviction that the parasitism of the latter was to blame for the impoverishment of the labouring classes. For instance, in 1817, Carlyle informed a correspondent that he had 'ceased' to be an admirer of the Tory *Quarterly Review*, which numbered Southey among its contributors, on the grounds that: 'their zeal for the "Social order" seems to eat them up, and their horror of revolution is violent as a hydrophobia'.⁶⁴⁵ Earlier the same year, Carlyle had mocked an article in the *Edinburgh Review* by the Church of Scotland minister and political economist Thomas Chalmers, in which the latter had proposed to alleviate pauperism by employing more clergymen, remarking: 'They who know the general habits of Scottish ministers will easily see how sovereign a specific this is'.⁶⁴⁶ In 1819, upon being invited to join a regiment of gentleman volunteers, formed in response to fears of a Radical rising, Carlyle famously responded: 'Hm, yes; but I haven't yet quite settled on which side!'.⁶⁴⁷ The following year, Carlyle went so far as to sympathise with the 'Cato Street Conspiracy' (a plot to murder the Prime Minister and Cabinet), claiming that that 'Well-founded complaints of poverty' had been met with nothing but 'indifference or cold-blooded ridicule on the part of Government'.⁶⁴⁸ Quite clearly, the young Carlyle was very far indeed from being a 'conservative' or 'Tory'. Indeed, over subsequent years, this animosity towards the church and state establishment persisted, Carlyle remarking as late as 1829: 'Do I not partly despise partly hate the Aristocracy of Scotland? I fear I do'.⁶⁴⁹

644'Southey' [1867], in *Reminiscences*, ed. C. E. Norton, Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972), 343-344.

645TC to James Johnston, 25th Sep. 1817, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-), 1:109.

646TC to Robert Mitchell, 5th July 1817, *CL* 1:103-104. The article was most likely 'Connexion between the Extension of the Church and the Extinction of Pauperism', which appeared in March 1817. Chalmers argued that compulsory poor relief further corrupted the morals of the poor, and that the money would be better spent on evangelical endeavours (as reprinted in *Select Works of Thomas Chalmers*, Vol. IX [Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co., 1856], 413-444).

647'Edward Irving' [1866-1867], in *Reminiscences*, 212-213. See also TC to John A. Carlyle, 26th Jan. 1820, *CL* 1:224-225.

648TC to Alexander Carlyle, 1st Mar. 1820, *CL* 1:230.

649Entry Feb. 1829, in *Two Note Books of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. C. E. Norton [1898], repr. (Mamaroneck NY: Paul P. Appel, 1972), 133-134

However, Carlyle's faith in the Radical panacea of popular, representative government had by this point discernibly diminished. In articulating his doubts about democracy, Carlyle relied upon a language of politics that stretched back as far as ancient Greece. Within this language, the desirability of democracy depended upon the character of the people. If the latter were virtuous, and dedicated to the public good, then democracy was indeed desirable; but if they were not, caring only for their own selfish interests, then 'democracy' would soon deteriorate into 'ochlocracy', or mob rule. For instance, in an entry to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* on the French statesman Necker (1821), Carlyle had described how the latter, at the outbreak of the French Revolution, 'found it impossible to unite an attention to the real interests of the State with the favour of an excited and ignorant mob, perpetually misled by wicked agitators'.⁶⁵⁰ Similarly, four years later, in *The Life of Schiller* (1825), Carlyle once again represented the French Revolution as a 'period of terror and delusion', in which the mob tyrannised over the rest of the community.⁶⁵¹ Carlyle's sharpening critique of democracy also overlapped with his objections to Benthamism. Again, the classical reference was crucial. As has been seen in chapter 1, the young Carlyle had criticised Bentham and his followers for resurrecting the theories of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, according to whom the driving motives of human existence were the avoidance of pain, and the pursuit of pleasure. For the young Carlyle, such notions had dangerous implications of selfishness, sensuality, and passivity, and were thus detrimental to the achievement of a good life, the latter consisting in self-mastery, duty, and action. According to Epicurus and later utilitarian theorists (such as David Hume and Adam Smith), the 'esteem' of others was a pleasurable sensation, and self-interested individuals thus strove to obtain it. In particular, they sought to cultivate a 'reputation', including through the performance of acts commonly perceived to be 'virtuous'. From this point of view, individual self-interest might provide an adequate basis for human sociability.⁶⁵² Moreover, as John Burrow has noted, Bentham had argued that government, like other institutions, ought to aim at the 'greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number'. In order for the government to know what actually made individuals happy, some form of democratic representation was necessary.⁶⁵³ In all cases, the implication was that individual self-interest, and particularly the desire for pleasure, might underpin and sustain a political community. However, Carlyle unequivocally rejected such

650'Necker' [1821] reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays, Chiefly Biographical*, ed. Crockett [1897], new ed. (London: Gibbings & Company, 1901), 60.

651 *The Life of Friedrich Schiller* [1825], People's edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), 105.

652 On Hume and Smith, see John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 6.

653 John W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 24-27, 38-42.

claims, arguing that genuine virtue, or a self-sacrificing dedication to the public good, was indispensable to the existence of a cohesive, well-ordered polity. As he put it in 'Voltaire' (1829):

It is contended by many that our mere love of personal Pleasure, or Happiness as it is called, acting on every individual... will of itself lead him to respect the rights of others, and wisely employ his own: to fulfil, on a mere principle of economy, all the duties of a good patriot; so that, in what respects the State, or the merely social existence of mankind, Belief, beyond the testimony of the senses, and Virtue, beyond the very common Virtue of loving what is pleasant, and hating what is painful, are to be considered as supererogatory qualifications, as ornamental, not essential. Many there are, on the other hand, who pause over this doctrine; cannot discover, in such a universe of conflicting atoms, any principle by which the whole shall cohere.⁶⁵⁴

The same year, Carlyle published another essay, 'Signs of the Times', in the *Edinburgh Review*. Here, Carlyle made the classical roots of his argument explicit, contrasting the political philosophy of Socrates and Plato to that of Smith and Bentham. He wrote:

The Philosopher of this age is not a Socrates, a Plato, a Hooker, or Taylor, who inculcates on men the necessity and infinite worth of moral goodness... but a Smith, a De Lolme, a Bentham, who chiefly inculcates the reverse of this... Love of country, in any high or generous sense... has little importance attached to it in such reforms... Men are to be guided only by their self-interests. Good government is a good balancing of these; and, except a keen eye and appetite for self-interest, requires no virtue in any quarter.⁶⁵⁵

As Biancamaria Fontana has shown, contributors to the *Edinburgh* frequently stressed the importance of 'public opinion', and the desirability of extending parliamentary representation to the 'middling ranks'.⁶⁵⁶ Indeed, Carlyle's 'Signs of the Times' was ostensibly a review of William Alexander Mackinnon's *The Rise, Progress, and Present State of Public Opinion in Great Britain* (1828), a work which embodied many of these assumptions.⁶⁵⁷ However, in this regard, Carlyle was

654'Voltaire' [1829], in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, People's Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), II:176-177.

655'Signs of the Times', 239-240.

656Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review 1802-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 42-44.

657See Lawrence Poston, 'Millites and Millenarians: The Context of Carlyle's "Signs of the Times"', in *Victorian Studies*, 26:4 (1983), 381-406 (389).

clearly out of step with his fellow contributors, and, again, his objections hinged upon the question of 'virtue'. The same year as 'Signs of the Times' appeared, Carlyle, in 'Voltaire' (1829), challenged the alleged omnipotence of 'Public Opinion', asking: 'without some belief in the necessary, eternal... nature of Virtue, existing in each individual, what could the moral judgement of a thousand or a thousand thousand individuals avail us?'.⁶⁵⁸ In sum, during the mid- and late-1820s, Carlyle had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the Radical panacea of representative government, believing that such reforms would be in vain if not founded upon a virtuous citizenry. As will be seen, this classical argument, as old as Plato, would continue to inform Carlyle's criticisms of the shortcomings of democracy, even after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians,

CARLYLE, SISMONDI, AND THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY (1815-1830)

Carlyle's youthful radicalism coincided with a significant interest in political economy, a fact that might at first seem surprising, given his reputation as an ill-informed and philistine critic of the science. For instance, according to Donald Winch, Carlyle's criticisms of political economy echoed those of Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, being, moreover, of a frequently ignorant and sentimental nature.⁶⁵⁹ However, the young Carlyle was in fact a keen student of political economy. In 1815, Carlyle reported having read 'Smith's wealth of nations' with 'much pleasure', and, two years later, further praised Smith as 'one of the most honest & ingenious men of his age'.⁶⁶⁰ Moreover, Carlyle's interest in political economy extended well beyond Adam Smith, to a number of more recent innovations in the discipline. As Boyd Hilton has noted, there were two distinct varieties of political economy in early nineteenth-century Britain, the 'evangelical', and the secular.⁶⁶¹ As the previous section has made clear, Carlyle was familiar with the writings of Thomas Chalmers, one of the most important proponents of the evangelical approach.⁶⁶² Furthermore, he was also well-informed regarding the more secular version of the science, as propounded, for instance, by David Ricardo and his followers. One of these was John Ramsay McCulloch, who, in his contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*, sought to revise and extend the doctrines of Smith in

⁶⁵⁸'Voltaire' [1829], *CME* II:177-178. See also journal entry for Aug. 1829, in *Two Note Books*, 141.

⁶⁵⁹Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 289-290, 400-402, 418-419. Winch has recently repeated these claims in his *Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3, 44-49, 69, 91.

⁶⁶⁰TC to Thomas Murray, 22nd Aug. 1815, *CL* 1:59; TC to Robert Mitchell, 31st Mar. 1817, *CL* 1:97-100. As Biancamaria Fontana points out, the first critical edition of Smith's *Wealth of Nations* had been published by David Buchanan in 1814 (Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society*, 70-71).

⁶⁶¹Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 69-70

⁶⁶²On Chalmers as an evangelical political economist, see Hilton, *The Age of Atonement*, 56-65, 78-91, 118-120, 242-245

light of recent economic developments.⁶⁶³ In February 1819, Carlyle read McCulloch's reviews and expositions of Ricardo 'in the last & preceding' numbers of the *Edinburgh*, opining that McCulloch seemed to be 'a diligent, sound-thinking man'.⁶⁶⁴ Moreover, in two entries for the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, published in 1820 and 1821, Carlyle referred to political economy as 'that important science', and went so far as to summarise the history of the discipline in France.⁶⁶⁵ Thus, the young Carlyle already had a significant knowledge of political economy and its history, including some of the more recent developments in the field, in both Britain and in France.

Given the breadth of his knowledge, it is perhaps unsurprising that Carlyle was chosen by David Brewster, the editor of the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, to translate a long article written by the Swiss economist Sismondi, entitled 'Political Economy' (published in December 1824).⁶⁶⁶ Indeed, rather than attributing Carlyle's early critique of political economy to Southey and Coleridge, as Winch does, it would be far more accurate to ascribe it to Sismondi. Thus, while Gareth Stedman Jones was no doubt correct to point out that the writings of Sismondi made very little impact in Britain, not being translated even 'in fragmentary form' until 1847, Carlyle and his translation constitute an important exception.⁶⁶⁷ The enthusiasm of Carlyle's response to the ideas of the latter might be gauged from a letter written by his wife Jane in 1840, the year Sismondi visited Britain. Here, Jane informed her correspondent: 'Carlyle does want excessively to see Sismondi. The translation of a book of his was one of his first literary exploits'.⁶⁶⁸ Before moving on to look at Carlyle's translation, however, it will be necessary to briefly outline the background of Sismondi's work.

For the ancient Greeks, 'chrematistics' (the art of getting rich) had been subordinate to a more general science of politics. Echoes of this idea were still audible in the writings of Adam Smith, who considered political economy to be a branch of a wider 'science of the legislator'. However, the early nineteenth century saw an increasing separation of political economy from politics, and the establishment of the former as an independent discipline.⁶⁶⁹ In Britain, this process was inextricably

⁶⁶³Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society*, 72-77.

⁶⁶⁴TC to Thomas Murray, 19th Feb. 1819, *CL* 1:164. Carlyle would have been referring to McCulloch's reviews of Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy* (1817), published in *Edinburgh Review*, XXX (June 1818), 59-87, and *Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency* (1816), published in *ibid.*, XXXI (Dec. 1818), 53-80. In 1822, Carlyle met with McCulloch in person, while the latter was busy preparing a course of lectures on political economy (TC to Alexander Carlyle, 4th Dec. 1822, *CL* 2:214-216).

⁶⁶⁵'Montesquieu' [1820], reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays, Chiefly Biographical*, ed. Crockett, 27-28; 'Necker' [1821], in *ibid.*, 52-53.

⁶⁶⁶See the editors' notes to *CL* 1:259, and Rodger L. Tarr, *Thomas Carlyle: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Pittsburgh PA: University Of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 404. See also TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 27th May 1822, *CL* 2:115.

⁶⁶⁷Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Industrie, Pauperism and the Hanoverian State', Working Paper, Centre for History and Economics, University of Cambridge (Jan. 1994), 15-20.

⁶⁶⁸Jane Welsh Carlyle to Frances Wedgwood, June 1840, *CL* 12:157.

⁶⁶⁹See Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 91-103, 169-170.

bound up with the frightened reaction against the French Revolution. Particularly, political economy, once simplified and systematized into a series of iron, immutable laws, could be used to demonstrate the impossibility of any thoroughgoing social and political reform.⁶⁷⁰ In France, by contrast, the separation was largely a response to the perceived failure of the Revolution, particularly the Terror. As Richard Whatmore has demonstrated, thinkers such as Jean-Baptiste Say came to believe that the French people lacked the moral qualities necessary to sustain a republican constitution. They thus came to pin their hopes on *industrie* as a means to inculcate these qualities, as a means to the adoption of such a constitution some time in the future. However, this goal was gradually lost sight of, and *industrie* came to be seen as an end in itself.⁶⁷¹ In both Britain and France, however, the basic dynamic was the same: political economy was increasingly seen as the science of the production of wealth, considered independently of wider social, political, and moral considerations.

Sismondi's article, as translated by Carlyle, can be understood as a reaction against this tendency.⁶⁷² Here, Sismondi agreed with Smith that political economy ought to be understood as a subordinate department of a wider 'science of government', promoting the good of all citizens, and of the political community as a whole. According to Sismondi, political economists were thus wrong to consider the production and the accumulation of wealth as ends in themselves, without explaining how 'to make every citizen participate' in the enjoyment of that wealth.⁶⁷³ Moreover, Sismondi challenged the idea that the market was self-regulating. In particular, he emphasised the recurrence of crises of over-production, brought about not only by mechanisation, but also by an advanced division of labour, due to which producers frequently over-estimated the level of demand for their products.⁶⁷⁴ In addition, these crises were further exacerbated by 'the improvement of machinery', which threw labourers out of work, thus reducing demand yet further, since 'all the ruined workmen were consumers'.⁶⁷⁵ For Sismondi, the most pernicious consequence of this system was the state of dependence to which it reduced those who relied upon selling their labour in return

670 Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty? A Historical Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 3, 89-98; Gregory Claeys, *The French Revolution Debate in Britain: The Origins of Modern Politics* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 155.

671 Richard Whatmore, *Republicanism and the French Revolution: An Intellectual History of Jean-Baptiste Say's Political Economy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

672 John Morrow echoes Donald Winch in claiming that 'Carlyle was probably most familiar' with the critique of political economy 'developed by Coleridge and Southey'. However, Morrow rightly adds that Carlyle was also 'indebted to the writings of Jean Charles Léonard Sismonde de Sismondi'. Regrettably, Morrow does not examine Carlyle's translation of Sismondi, which will therefore be discussed below. See John Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 84-85, 91, 238 (n).

673 'Political Economy', as reprinted in *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, ed. Brewster (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1830), Vol. XVII, 37-38.

674 'Political Economy', 54.

675 'Political Economy', 76.

for a wage. Continually competing with each other, they saw their wages forced ever further down, even below the point of subsistence. For instance, Sismondi argued, agricultural labourers were 'not only more dependent than metayers, but even than serfs', having no property of their own, and thus relying entirely on those who paid their wages. For those unable to find work at any wage, 'Parish aids' and other forms of poor relief served only to replace one form of 'dependence' with another.⁶⁷⁶ Moreover, Sismondi argued that the division of labour in manufactures had made the labourer similarly 'dependent', in that 'he required not only the co-operation of other workmen, but also raw materials, proper implements', and was thus obliged to accept any wage on offer.⁶⁷⁷ Sismondi thus deplored the recurrence of crises of over-production, and the continual downward pressure that competition and mechanisation exerted upon wages. Together, these served to not only to impoverish the worker, but also to strip him of his independence and self-respect. As Sismondi put it:

When every hour is a struggle for life, all passions are concentrated in selfishness; each forgets the pain of others in what himself suffers... notwithstanding all the advantages which man has gained from the arts, one is sometimes tempted to execrate the division of labour, and the invention of manufactures, on beholding to what extremes of wretchedness they have reduced human beings.⁶⁷⁸

In sum, in the article translated by Carlyle for the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, Sismondi challenged the growing tendency to study the production of material wealth in isolation from other subjects essential to the existence of a political economy. Moreover, he argued that the market was not self-regulating, and, if left to operate unhindered, would bring about recurrent crises of over-production, and also reduce the labourer to a state of dependence, not only on employers, but also on market forces and parish doles, the result of which was moral degradation.

Following his translation of Sismondi, Carlyle seems to have assimilated a number of the latter's ideas, regarding both political economy as a discipline, and the workings of modern commercial society. For instance, while continuing to believe that political economy had a useful role to play, Carlyle now stressed its limitations, and the need for it to be subordinate to wider political considerations.⁶⁷⁹ In 1829, Carlyle wrote:

⁶⁷⁶'Political Economy', 51

⁶⁷⁷'Political Economy', 43

⁶⁷⁸'Political Economy', 75.

⁶⁷⁹Early in 1827, Carlyle wrote satirically in his notebook: 'Is not Political Economy useful; and ought not Joseph Hume and MacCulluch [sic] to be honoured of all men? - My cow is useful, [but] I keep her in the stall... [not] in my

The question of money-making, even of National Money-Making, is not a high but a low one... Political Philosophy... should be a scientific revelation of the whole secret mechanism whereby men cohere together in society; should tell us what is meant by 'country' (*patria*), by what causes men are happy, moral, religious, or the contrary: instead of all which, it tells us how 'flannel jackets' are exchanged for 'pork hams'.⁶⁸⁰

Having translated Sismondi, Carlyle immediately began to draw upon the ideas of the latter, in an attempt to make sense of the unprecedented economic changes that were taking place around him. Indeed, Sismondi's critique of the market, and his stress on the need for a 'science of government', overlapped with the doubts that Carlyle had expressed in relation to democracy, particularly regarding the socially corrosive effects of selfishness. In 1825, the year after the appearance of his translation, Carlyle visited London. In a letter to his brother, he emphasised the selfishness and greed that commercial society engendered, and the deleterious effect these had upon any sense of political community. He wrote, referring to the inhabitants of London:

They live as aliens here, unrooted in the soil; without political, religious, or even much social, interest in the community; distinctly feeling every day that with them it is money only that can "make the mare to go." Hence Cash! cash! cash! is the everlasting cry of their souls.⁶⁸¹

In 'Signs of the Times' (1829), Carlyle lamented that the 'infinite, absolute character of Virtue' had been supplanted by 'calculation of the Profitable'.⁶⁸² The following year, in 'Jean Paul Richter Again', he wrote of the 'commercial genius of the nation, counteracting and suppressing its political genius', and thus promoting 'a hollow, windy vacuity of internal character'.⁶⁸³ Thus far, Carlyle's criticism of commercial society followed the same lines as his criticism of democracy; self-interest alone could not sustain a political community, the latter requiring some degree of virtue on the part of individuals.

In 'Signs of the Times', Carlyle also echoed Sismondi's concerns about the introduction of

parlour' (entry for 7th Jan. 1827, in *Two Note Books*, 100-101).

680Entry c. Aug. 1829, in *Two Notebooks*, 143-145. See also entry dated 7th Jan 1827, 100-101.

681TC to Alexander Carlyle, 8th Jan. 1825, *CL* 3:240-243.

682'Signs of the Times', 245.

683'Jean Paul Richter Again' [Jan. 1830], *CME* III:34. See also *Carlyle's Unfinished History of German Literature* [written early 1830], ed. Shine (Lexington KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 14-15.

machinery, and particularly its effects upon those reliant on working for a wage. Again, it is significant that Carlyle's essay appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. Here, political economists such as McCulloch had sought to refute Sismondi's claims regarding machinery, arguing that the true cause of distress was not over-production, but rather various commercial restrictions imposed by the state.⁶⁸⁴ Moreover, as noted above, Carlyle's essay was also written partly in response to Mackinnon's *The Rise, Progress, and Present State of Public Opinion in Great Britain* (1828). Here, Mackinnon had dismissed fears about machinery in a footnote.⁶⁸⁵ Perhaps provoked by such nonchalance, Carlyle protested:

On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one... how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor will be a question for Political Economists, and a much more complex and important one than any they have yet engaged with.⁶⁸⁶

Moreover, in an article published the previous year, in 1828, Carlyle had quoted the opinions of Christian Gottlob Heyne, the German classical scholar, regarding pauperism. For Heyne,

“The saddest aspect which the decay of civic society can exhibit has always appeared to me to be this, when honourable, honour-loving, conscientious diligence cannot, by the utmost efforts of toil, obtain the necessities of life; or when the working man cannot even find work, but must stand with folded arms, lamenting his forced idleness”.⁶⁸⁷

In sum, following his encounter with Sismondi, Carlyle had become much more sceptical regarding the notion of political economy as an independent science of wealth, as well as regarding the shortcomings of modern commercial society. As we shall see, these doubts would prove crucial in shaping his response to the Saint-Simonians, who were similarly indebted to Sismondi.

684For instance, McCulloch, 'Commercial Revulsions', in *ER* (June 1826), as cited in Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society*, 140-142.

685Poston, 'Millites and Millenarians: The Context of Carlyle's "Signs of the Times"', 389.

686'Signs of the Times', 233-236.

687'The Life of Heyne' [1828], *CME* II:57-58. See also *Life of Schiller*, 93.

'THESE BASE EARTHY BLOODSUCKERS': CARLYLE AND THE BOOKSELLERS (1824-1830)

In addition to these general criticisms of commercial society, Carlyle also drew upon Sismondi's ideas in attempting to make sense of his own experience. Being part of what Lenore O'Boyle famously termed an 'excess of educated men', and having no independent capital of his own, Carlyle relied upon selling his labour, namely, articles and books, in return for a wage.⁶⁸⁸ As Stefan Collini has noted, 'the most sensitive dividing line in Victorian society was between those who were and those who were not recognized as gentlemen', a 'gentleman' being defined by his independence, and his freedom from direct market relations.⁶⁸⁹ This was certainly a sensitive issue for Carlyle, who deeply resented his dependence upon 'these base earthy bloodsuckers the Booksellers'.⁶⁹⁰ For instance, in 1825, Carlyle informed his brother of his 'contempt for all the Booksellers of the Universe', explaining that he had promised himself 'the pleasure of writing something independent of them, and their pelf-loving speculations'.⁶⁹¹ Two years later, he complained that in Britain, the 'meritorious man of letters' found himself in a 'relation of entire dependence on the merchants of literature'.⁶⁹² Visiting London the previous year, Carlyle had seen the corrupting influence of such dependence writ large, exclaiming in a letter:

is *this* the Literary World? This rascal rout, this dirty rabble, destitute not only of high feeling or knowledge or intellect, but even of common honesty? The very best of them are ill-natured weaklings: they are not red-blooded *men* at all; they are only *things* for writing "articles".⁶⁹³

The following year, Carlyle explained that for Schiller, the 'literary tradesmen, the man who writes for gain', was little better than a 'Slave'.⁶⁹⁴ To give a sense of what such 'dependence' meant for Carlyle in practice, it is worth citing the following letter from Francis Jeffrey, the editor of the

688Lenore O'Boyle, 'The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800-1850', in *The Journal of Modern History*, 42:4 (1970), 480-487.

689Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 30-31, 37-38.

690TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 7th Mar. 1824, *CL* 3:44. There is a good discussion of Carlyle's abhorrence of 'dependence' in Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 30-43. In contrast to the present chapter, Morrow argues that Carlyle's 'Calvinist' family background determined these attitudes.

691TC to John A. Carlyle, 7th Mar. 1825, *CL* 3:298-299.

692'State of German Literature' [1827], in *CME* I:37.

693TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 20th Dec. 1824, *CL* 3:233-234. In 'Goethe' (1828), Carlyle complained of the competition that existed between writers, arguing that the 'polity of Literature is called a Republic; oftener it is an Anarchy' ('Goethe' [1828], *CME* I:174).

694*Life of Schiller*, 175.

Edinburgh Review. Referring to the corrections he had made to Carlyle's essay on 'Burns' (1828), Jeffrey wrote:

I was compelled to make it a little shorter – and induced to vary a few phrases that appeared to me to savour of affectation... You really must not take the pet, because I do my duty – He who comes into a crowd much submit to be squeezed – and at all events must not think himself ill treated if his skirts are crumpled or the folds of his drapery a little compressed... So pray be a good boy – and do not sulk or make faces again.⁶⁹⁵

In sum, Sismondi's theories about dependence, and the moral degradation it entailed, were borne out by Carlyle's own experience.

Carlyle not only objected to dependence upon booksellers and competition with other authors, but also to dependence upon the reading public, whom the writer was obliged to court and flatter in order to earn his bread.⁶⁹⁶ In his preface to *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1824), Carlyle opined that the 'great mass of readers' read only to 'drive away the tedium of mental vacancy', employing literature 'as their grandfathers employed tobacco and diluted brandy'.⁶⁹⁷ Moreover, this relation of dependence further irked Carlyle insofar as it jarred with his ideal conception of the man of letters. As he indignantly exclaimed in 'Novalis' (1829):

Is it the Reviewer's real trade to be the pander of laziness, self-conceit, and all manner of contemptuous stupidity on the part of his reader [...]... Is he the priest of Literature and Philosophy, to interpret their mysteries to the common man... Or merely the lackey of Dullness, striving for certain wages, of pudding or praise, by the month or quarter [...] ⁶⁹⁸

To Carlyle, perhaps the most hateful facet of commercial publishing was the practice of 'puffing', whereby publishers would arrange for their authors to favourably review each other's works, thus boosting public interest in their wares. Indeed, as Nicholas Mason has recently shown, Carlyle, along with a number of other writers, went so far as to blame the so-called 'Crash of 1826' on

⁶⁹⁵Jeffrey to TC, 22nd Oct 1828, in *The Letters of Francis Jeffrey to Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. W. Christie (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 27-28.

⁶⁹⁶'Men of letters have... ceased to court individuals, and have begun to court the public' (Macaulay, 'Mr. Robert Montgomery's Poems, and the Modern Practice of Puffing', in *Edinburgh Review*, LI [Apr. 1830], 194-196).

⁶⁹⁷*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship. A Novel. From the German of Goethe*, trans. Carlyle (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd / London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1824), I: ix-x.

⁶⁹⁸'Novalis' [1829], *CME* II:188.

puffing, believing that the book-trade had fallen into such disrepute with the public that it was no longer possible to sell books.⁶⁹⁹ This was reflected in 'Signs of the Times' (1829), where Carlyle reiterated Sismondi's concerns about mechanisation, writing that 'Literature' had 'its Paternoster-row mechanism, its Trade dinners, its Editorial conclaves, and huge subterranean puffing bellows', so that books were 'not only printed, but, in a great measure, written and sold, by machinery'.⁷⁰⁰

Here, it is crucial to emphasise that Carlyle's overriding grievance against the world of commercial book-selling was not poverty as such. For instance, in 1828, Carlyle informed a correspondent that being 'poor' did not necessarily make one 'miserable', whereas being 'frivolous and selfish, and a lover of Pleasure rather than of Truth' did.⁷⁰¹ Similarly, in 'Burns', published later the same year, Carlyle wrote that while Burns was poor, 'hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it'.⁷⁰² Rather than poverty, what Carlyle objected to was dependence, and the moral corruption it entailed. As has been seen in chapter 1, Carlyle was at this time reading the Greek and Roman Stoics. For the Stoics, material wealth was, to use the technical phrase, a 'preferred indifferent', ultimately being of little relevance to human happiness. In their opinion, what mattered was rather living in accordance with the laws of nature, that is, living rationally, and living virtuously.⁷⁰³ In this perspective, as A. A. Long has recently put it, 'nothing is ultimately good or bad, nothing ultimately makes for happiness or unhappiness, except one's moral integrity or its opposite'.⁷⁰⁴ Carlyle thus objected to the dependence engendered by commercial society, which robbed those subject to it of their moral integrity and autonomy, goods infinitely more valuable than money. These doubts concerning commercial society, when combined with doubts concerning democracy, meant that Carlyle would have been highly receptive to many of the arguments of the Saint-Simonians, to whom we now turn.

699Nicholas Mason, 'The Quack Has Become God': Puffery, Print, and the 'Death' of Literature in Romantic-Era Britain', in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 60:1 (2005), 1-31.

700'Signs of the Times', 233-236.

701TC to Henry Inglis, 22nd May 1828, *CL* 4:374.

702'Burns' [Dec. 1828], *CME* II:47-48.

703Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 42-44.

704A. A. Long, 'Stoic Philosophers on Persons, Property-Ownership, and Community', in his *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006), 335-359 (358).

II.

SAINT-SIMON, THE SAINT-SIMONIANS, AND THE IDEA OF A 'CRITICAL ERA'

As has been seen in the previous chapter, the Saint-Simonians had understood historical progress in terms of an alternating cycle of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. This section will look a little more closely at the Saint-Simonians' characterisation of the most recent 'critical' era, which, according to them, had begun with the Reformation, and continued through the French Revolution, up until the present day. In the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians explained that

critical eras... were always useful, necessary, indispensable, in that they destroyed outdated forms [of society], which, after having for a long time contributed to the development of humanity, had come to impede it. They thus facilitated the conception and realisation of better forms.⁷⁰⁵

In this sense, the most recent 'critical' era had served a useful purpose, in dissolving the superannuated institutions of the Middle Ages, and thus preparing the way for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. However, the Saint-Simonians made a further distinction, dividing 'critical' eras into 'two distinct periods':

during the first, there is a unity of action... its aim, consciously for some, instinctively for others, is the *destruction* of the established order... the second period comprises the interval that separates the *destruction* of the old order and the *construction* of a new order. At this point, the anarchy has ceased to be violent, but it has become more profound.⁷⁰⁶

The Saint-Simonians believed that post-revolutionary Europe presented the spectacle of such 'second period'. The allotted task of the most recent 'critical' era, namely, the destruction of the institutions of the Middle Ages, had already been accomplished. If the 'critical' era was allowed to continue indefinitely, 'ideas and sentiments' would lose all semblance of 'social character', with potentially 'disastrous' consequences.⁷⁰⁷ Thus, as Reinhart Koselleck has pointed out, the Saint-

⁷⁰⁵*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année. 1829. Seconde Édition* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur and A. Mesnier, 1830), 108.

⁷⁰⁶*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 79-80.

⁷⁰⁷[Charles Laurent], 'Funérailles de Talma' in *Le Producteur, journal philosophique de l'industrie, des sciences et des beaux-arts*, tome cinquième (Paris: Sautet et Cie., 1826), 129.

Simonians understood 'crisis' not as 'a crucial point of decision' (the older meaning of the word), but rather as an all-encompassing, ongoing process, 'a truly autonomous concept of history'.⁷⁰⁸

Within this general outline of a 'critical era', the Saint-Simonians also put forward more specific analyses of the French Revolution and contemporary 'liberalism'. In the fourth volume of *L'Industrie* (1818), Saint-Simon had characterised the French Revolution as an uprising of the industrious classes against the parasitic institutions of the *ancien régime*. According to Saint-Simon, the industrious classes had largely succeeded in their 'critical activity', and particularly their attempt to impose restrictions upon the exercise of arbitrary power.⁷⁰⁹ In the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians extended this analysis to contemporary 'liberalism', arguing that the latter pursued a purely negative, 'critical' agenda, seeking only to limit the power of the state.⁷¹⁰ In this sense, the 'liberals' were, according to the Saint-Simonians, 'men for whom the word *emancipation* means nothing more than *revolt*'. Having already accomplished their task, such self-styled proponents of 'so-called *modern* opinions' already 'belonged to the past'.⁷¹¹

The idea of a 'critical' era also framed the Saint-Simonians' analysis of political economy. In an article published in the *Producteur*, Enfantin explained that 'the science of political economy' had originally been 'conceived' as part of a more 'general science, comprising the entirety of social facts'. However, with the publication of Quesnay's famous 'Tableau économique' in 1758, a process had been initiated whereby economics came to be dealt with in isolation from other 'facts', within an ever more 'narrow framework'. This, according to Enfantin, had culminated in an understanding of political economy as a system of iron laws, operating independently of other social 'facts', or, in other words, as 'a *natural* code, which, at all times, ought to serve as the basis of all social relations'.⁷¹² However, according to the Saint-Simonians, this separation of economics from politics had served a valid 'critical' function, reflecting the desire of the industrious classes to cast off the superannuated institutions of the medieval past:

708Reinhart Koselleck, 'Crisis' [1982], trans. M. Richter, in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 67:2 [2006], 376-377).

709*L'Industrie, où Discussions politiques, morales et philosophiques, dans l'intérêt des hommes livrés à des travaux utiles et indépendans*, tome quatrième, premier cahier (Paris: Chez Verdière, 1818), 122-125, 141-151. See also 9-14.

710A point made by Shirley M. Gruner, *Economic Materialism and Social Moralism: A Study in the History of Ideas in France from the Latter Part of the 18th Century to the Middle of the 19th Century* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 143-148.

711*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 6. See also *ibid.*, 204, 323-324, and [Bazard], 'De quelques-uns des obstacles qui s'opposent à la production d'une nouvelle doctrine générale', in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 92-93.

712[Enfantin], 'Considérations sur les progrès de l'économie politique, dans ses rapports avec l'organisation sociale', in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 17, 22-25.

The economists seem to have posed themselves the following question: “Given that the governors are more ignorant than the governed; supposing further that, far from favouring the development of industry, these leaders seek to stifle it, and appoint as their representatives the born enemies of the producing classes, what is the industrial organisation most suited to society?” - *Laissez faire, laissez passer!*⁷¹³

In this sense, the demand to put an end to state intervention in economic life had once served a useful purpose. However, according to the Saint-Simonians, the 'maxim' *laissez-faire* had already been 'applied in France and in Britain'.⁷¹⁴ It had thus, like liberalism, already fulfilled its mission, and now belonged to the past. As P.-M. Laurent put it in his review of Carlyle's 'Signs of the Times', 'political economy' had been shaped by the 'moral order in which it grew up', and was thus 'subject to the same decrepitude' as all other critical ideas.⁷¹⁵

Significantly, the Saint-Simonians had made a point of sending Carlyle their review of Sismondi.⁷¹⁶ Indeed, it is likely they had recognised the influence of the latter's ideas in Carlyle's writings, particularly 'Signs of the Times'. For their part, the Saint-Simonians drew similar inspiration from Sismondi, and many of their arguments would thus have already been familiar to Carlyle. For instance, like Sismondi, the Saint-Simonians claimed that mechanisation, competition, and the division of labour had brought about a disequilibrium between production and consumption, and that this had in turn led to crises of over-production:

No overall view presides over production: it takes place indiscriminately, without foresight; it is too little at one point, too much at another; it is this absence of a general perspective on the needs of consumption, and on the resources of production, that is the cause of industrial crises.⁷¹⁷

In the *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), Saint-Simon had returned again and again to the question of the 'moral and physical condition of the poorest class'.⁷¹⁸ In the *Doctrine*, the Saint-Simonians clarified this concern, arguing, like Sismondi, that the unregulated operation of market forces

⁷¹³*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 89-91.

⁷¹⁴*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 89-91.

⁷¹⁵Paul-Mathieu Laurent, 'Caractère de Notre Époque', in *Organisateur*, 32 (21st Mar. 1830), 2-3.

⁷¹⁶[Enfantin], review of the new edition of Sismondi's *Nouveaux Principes d'Économie Politique*, in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 95-97.

⁷¹⁷*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 191-192.

⁷¹⁸*Nouveau Christianisme, dialogues entre un conservateur et un novateur* (Paris: Bossange Père and A. Sautelet et Cie., 1825), 26.

reduced the wage-labourer to a hopeless state of dependence. As they explained, referring to the 'class of *proletarians*':

The worker is not, like the slave, the direct property of his master; his condition, always provisional, is fixed by a transaction agreed between the two: but is this transaction free on the part of the worker? It is not, because he is forced to accept, under pain of death, being reduced to earn his subsistence from day to day... Today, the mass of workers is exploited by the men upon whose means of production they rely.⁷¹⁹

Moreover, according to one Saint-Simonian, 'a certain number of economists' provided an apology for such exploitation, in that they 'envisaged the class of wage-labourers' as little more than 'commodities'.⁷²⁰ Indeed, according to the Saint-Simonians, the condition of the labouring classes was the rock on which 'critical' ideas foundered.⁷²¹ While notions of *laissez-faire* and 'democracy' might have been useful in destroying, they were not suited to building up. In this sense, the Saint-Simonians claimed that the language of 'rights' had become a barrier to further social progress, serving to 'consecrate the inviolability, one might almost say the sanctity, of the current organisation of property', and to put the latter beyond the reach of 'reform' by 'the moralist and the legislator'.⁷²² In sum, the force and ideas of the 'critical' era having exhausted themselves, contemporary Europe presented the spectacle of 'the end of one of those *palingenetic* crises, by which an exhausted critical era begins to pass into a new organic era'.⁷²³

III.

'THIS MONSTROUS TWENTY-MILLION CLASS': CARLYLE ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (1832-1838)

In the writings of the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle found an echo of many of his earlier ideas, but

719*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 177-178. See further Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 129-132.

720[Buchez], 'De l'Hygiène', in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 58. See also 'Considérations sur le rapport du nombre des producteurs à celui des non-producteurs en Angleterre', in *ibid.*, 104-106.

721Morrow, having noted Carlyle's debts to Sismondi, adds in a footnote: 'Saint Simonian statements on the plight of the working classes were endorsed by Carlyle rather than forming the basis of his own views on this issue' (Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 238). However, Morrow does not explain or elaborate, and offers no discussion of Saint-Simonism. It seems to me that Saint-Simonism integrated many of Sismondi's insights into a systematic theory of a 'critical' era, and would thus have helped Carlyle to clarify and further develop his earlier ideas.

722*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 186.

723*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 362.

now integrated into a systematic theory of a 'critical' era. Indeed, as John Stuart Mill later recalled: 'In Carlyle... I found bitter denunciations of an "age of unbelief," and of the present age as such... But all that was true in these denunciations I thought that I found more calmly and philosophically stated by the St. Simonians'.⁷²⁴ In his writings on the French Revolution, Carlyle reiterated Saint-Simon's argument that the latter had been an uprising of the industrious classes against the corrupt and superannuated institutions of the *ancien régime*. For instance, in 'Diderot' (1833), Carlyle argued that, by the time of the Revolution, these institutions had long been in decline, referring to 'the End of a Social System which for above a thousand years had been building itself together, and, after that, had begun, for some centuries, to moulder down'. In this sense, the Revolution had been the moment at which 'mouldering changes into a rushing; active hands drive-in their wedges, set-to their crowbars'.⁷²⁵ In 1837, Carlyle returned to this theme in the *French Revolution*. As he explained to a correspondent, the 'essential all-pervading Idea' of this book was '*the fatally false condition of the Lower Classes*'.⁷²⁶ In the book itself, he argued that the meaning of the Revolution lay in the revolt of 'this monstrous twenty-million Class, hitherto the dumb sheep which these others had to agree about the manner of shearing'.⁷²⁷ Moreover, in describing the revolt of the industrious classes, Carlyle attributed exactly the same 'critical' function to *laissez-faire* as the Saint-Simonians. For instance, in the *French Revolution*, he referred to how

Industry, all noosed and haltered, as if it too were some beast of chase for the mighty hunters of this world to bait, and cut slices from, - cries passionately to these its well-paid guides and watchers... *Laissez faire*, Leave me alone of *your* guidance!⁷²⁸

Carlyle has sometimes been situated on the same axis as Edmund Burke and Robert Southey, as an opponent and critic of the French Revolution.⁷²⁹ However, as Carlyle made quite clear in 'Diderot', the Revolution had been 'inevitable'.⁷³⁰ Furthermore, in the *French Revolution*, Carlyle went so far as to argue that the Terror itself had been justified, particularly as a means to ensure the subsistence of the lower classes.⁷³¹ In this sense, Carlyle sought to remove the Revolution from the

⁷²⁴Mill, *Autobiography* [1873], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 139.

⁷²⁵'Diderot' [1833], *CME*, V:3-4. See also *Lectures on the History of Literature* [delivered 1838], ed. Greene (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1892), 161.

⁷²⁶TC to Thomas Arnold, 9th Jan. 1840, *CL* 12:10-12. Carlyle had at one point considered calling the book 'History of Sansculottism'. See TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 3rd Feb. 1835, *CL* 8:41-42.

⁷²⁷*The French Revolution* [1837], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1906), I:93.

⁷²⁸*FR*, I:43.

⁷²⁹Seamus Deane, *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England, 1789-1832* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 38-42.

⁷³⁰'Diderot', 3-4;

⁷³¹*FR*, II:245-246. See also II:381.

realm of partisan political disputes, and to present it as a matter of objective, historical necessity.⁷³² His aim was thus, as he put it in 'Mirabeau' (1837), to allow 'a second generation', 'relieved in some measure' from the 'natural panic-delirium of the first contemporary one', to 'discern and measure what its predecessor could only execrate and shriek over'.⁷³³ Indeed, this aim was clearly perceived by several French reviewers of Carlyle's *French Revolution*. For his part, the radical republican Armand Marrast praised Carlyle for having defended the necessity of the Revolution before the British public, a point that was echoed by two other sympathetic reviewers, Philarètes Chasles and Joseph Antoine Milsand.⁷³⁴ From the other end of the political spectrum, the Roman Catholic art critic Alexis-François Rio was horrified by Carlyle's apology for the Terror.⁷³⁵ In 1838, Carlyle gave further confirmation of his position, describing the Revolution as 'that bursting in of the masses who could not starve', 'but must rise up and get rid of the oppression that weighed them down'.⁷³⁶ In considering the Revolution to be necessary, justified, and inevitable, Carlyle thus differed widely from figures such as Burke and Southey. Indeed, after having delivered a public lecture on the revolution in May 1838, Carlyle wrote to his brother that 'my audience, mainly Tory, could not be expected to sympathize with me'.⁷³⁷

However, Carlyle was not uncritical in his endorsement of the French Revolution. Much like Saint-Simon, he argued that while the industrious classes might have succeeded in their negative aims, they had lacked a positive programme of reform, and had thus allowed the leadership of the Revolution to slip into the hands of 'philosophical Advocates, rich Shopkeepers, [and] rural Noblesse'.⁷³⁸ Carlyle also reserved particular ire for political cliques such as the Girondins, who, he claimed, had used "the masses" as a means to their own ends.⁷³⁹ The Revolution was thus not yet complete, in that it had merely replaced 'Aristocracy of Feudal Parchment' with 'Aristocracy of the Moneybag'.⁷⁴⁰ While Carlyle therefore approved of the French Revolution as a 'critical'

732 Brian Young describes Carlyle's book as 'a generational revolt in print'. See his *The Victorian Eighteenth Century: An Intellectual History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25-26.

733 'Mirabeau' [1837], *CME* V:206. Or, as he put it elsewhere, while the revolution had already been 'execrated', 'it were better now to begin understanding' ('Parliamentary History of the French Revolution' [1837], *CME* VI:2).

734 Armand Marrast, 'Les hommes de la Révolution française, jugés en Angleterre par M. Thomas Carlyle', in *Revue du Progrès politique, social et littéraire*, tome premier, 2e série (1st Mar. 1840), 158 (for Carlyle's opinion on Marrast, see TC to John Stuart Mill, 8th Dec. 1836, *CL* 9:105-106); Philarète Chasles, 'Thomas Carlyle. The French Revolution, A History', in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1st Oct. 1840), 113; 'Antoine Dilmans' [Joseph Antoine Milsand], 'Thomas Carlyle', in *La Revue Indépendante* (25th Sep. 1846), 121.

735 Rio recalled his shock in A.-F. Rio, *Epilogue à l'art chrétien* (Fribourg-en-Brigau: M-B. Herder, 1870), II:333. For Carlyle's opinion of Rio, see TC to John A. Carlyle, 11th Mar. 1839, *CL* 11:42-51.

736 *Lectures on the History of Literature*, 200

737 TC to John A. Carlyle, 26th May 1839, *CL* 11:110-111. This was part of a course of lectures on 'The Revolutions of Modern Europe', delivered 1st - 18th May 1838.

738 *FR*, II:222-223.

739 *FR*, II:229.

740 *FR*, II:383.

phenomenon, he made clear that it had not yet become 'organic'. As John Stuart Mill, who was also familiar with the writings and the terminology of the Saint-Simonians, put it, Carlyle's book thus represented 'the critique of critique', or 'the organic spirit in a vague state'.⁷⁴¹ Indeed, a similar point was made by Philarètes Chasles, who explained that according to Carlyle, 'the entirety of modern Europe constitutes a vast compromise between the past and the future; we are not yet organic'.⁷⁴²

'A CRISIS WHICH THE SOONER BRINGS CURE': CARLYLE ON BRITAIN (1832-1838)

In the *French Revolution*, Carlyle claimed that 'all European Societies' were 'travelling' through the same 'course', and that the British would thus be well-advised to learn from the experience of the French.⁷⁴³ As one reviewer pointed out, the implication of this passage was that Britain too was witnessing a revolt of the industrious classes, and that 'the matchless British constitution' risked being 'rent asunder by some larger growth of the social germ'.⁷⁴⁴ Indeed, Carlyle often made this point quite explicitly, extending the theories of the Saint-Simonians to Britain. In doing so, he made particular use of the idea that 'democracy' was a purely 'critical' phenomenon, serving to overthrow the obsolete institutions of the medieval past, in preparation for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. For instance, in 'Cagliostro' (1833), Carlyle wrote of

the stern Avatar of DEMOCRACY, hymning its world-thrilling birth- and battle-song in the distant West [i.e. America]; - therefrom to go out conquering and to conquer, till it have made a circuit of all the Earth, and old dead Feudal Europe is born again (after infinite pangs!) into a new Industrial one.⁷⁴⁵

Indeed, as this passage implies, Carlyle believed that some form of popular representation had become inevitable for Britain too. As he made quite clear in a manuscript entitled 'National Education', dated February 1835:

[The] old guides and commanders (Clergy, Gentry and such like) are becoming distrusted;

741JSM to Auguste Comte, 15th Dec. 1842, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XIII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part II', ed. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963).

742Philarète Chasles, 'Thomas Carlyle. The French Revolution, A History', in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1st Oct. 1840), 125.

743*The French Revolution*, II:382-383. See also TC to Thomas Arnold, 9th Jan. 1840, *CL* 12:10-12. This passage was cited by John Forster in a review in the *Examiner* (17th Sep. and 1st Oct. 1837), 596 et seq. As Carlyle put it in 'Goethe's Works' (1832), there had already 'been a French Revolution', and there was 'now pretty rapidly proceeding a European Revolution'. 'Goethe's Works' [1832], *CME* IV:143.

744W. H. Channing, 'Carlyle's French Revolution', in *Boston Quarterly Review*, I (Oct. 1838), 409.

745'Cagliostro' [1833], *CME* V:82.

class after class of them is getting dismissed from the actual guidship... the Democratic force in England which had long been increasing, has hence forth become irresistible... with the mass of the people the whole destiny of all classes in England now lies.⁷⁴⁶

During these years, Carlyle also made creative use of the Saint-Simonian concept of a 'critical' era, extending and applying it to contemporary British politics. As has been seen, Carlyle had rejected the idea, expressed by Bentham amongst others, that individual self-interest might provide the basis for a stable polity, through the medium of representative government. For Carlyle, such self-interest was in fact socially corrosive, undermining and sapping the foundations of a political community. In Saint-Simonism, Carlyle found a way to make sense of Bentham's doctrines, coming to see their corrosive effects as a necessary part of a 'critical' era.⁷⁴⁷ For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), Carlyle argued that 'Utilitarianism' was admirably 'calculated for destroying, only not for rebuilding!'.⁷⁴⁸

In his account of the French Revolution, Carlyle had echoed the Saint-Simonians' presentation of *laissez-faire* as a necessary 'critical' phenomenon, preparing the way for a new 'organic' era. This was no less true of his writings on Britain during the same period. In October 1831, shortly after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle had written that the 'principle of *Laissez-faire*' was 'fast verging' to 'a consummation'.⁷⁴⁹ Two years later, in a letter to Mill, Carlyle repeated this prediction, describing the writings of the political economist Harriet Martineau as 'the acme of the *Laissez-faire* system, a crisis which the sooner brings cure'. Moreover, he then added that Martineau might learn much from 'the very Saint Simonians'.⁷⁵⁰ In his reply, Mill agreed with Carlyle's assessment of Martineau, but questioned whether *laissez-faire* had yet entirely served its purpose, writing: 'that principle like other negative ones has work to do yet, work, namely, of a destroying kind'.⁷⁵¹

One reason for Carlyle's desire to see *laissez-faire* reach a 'consummation' was his increasing dissatisfaction with commercial society. As has been seen earlier in this chapter, Carlyle had, even

746'National Education' [3rd Feb. 1835], MS in National Library of Scotland, published in *CL* 8:29-36. See also 'Sir Walter Scott' (1838), where Carlyle claimed that 'once Printing have grown to be as Talk, then Democracy (if we look into the roots of things) is not a bugbear and a probability, but a certainty, and event as good as come' ('Sir Walter Scott' [1838], *CME* VI:75). See also *Sartor Resartus* [written 1830-1831, first published 1833-1834], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 31.

747'Characteristics', 36-37.

748*Sartor Resartus*, 178; TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 12th May 1835, *CL* 8:117.

749Journal entry dated 22nd Oct 1831, in *Two Notebooks*, 206-207

750TC to JSM, 22nd Feb. 1833, *CL* 6:329, 332.

751JSM to TC, 11th / 12th Apr. 1833, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part I'.

before his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, condemned greed as detrimental to virtue and public spirit. In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle reiterated this idea, asking:

Call ye that a Society... where there is no longer any Social Idea extant; not so much as the Idea of a common Home, but only of a common over-crowded Lodging-house? Where each, isolated, regardless of his neighbour, turned against his neighbour, clutches what he can get, and cries 'Mine!' and calls it Peace, because, in the cut-purse and cut-throat Scramble, no steel knives, but only a far cunninger sort, can be employed?⁷⁵²

Moreover, Carlyle had, particularly following his translation of Sismondi, expressed misgivings about the effects of competition and mechanisation, particularly on wage-labourers, who found themselves reduced to a state of hopeless dependence. This concern would have been reinforced by the Saint-Simonians, who had reiterated many of Sismondi's arguments. In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle compared the 'Poor perishing, like neglected, foundered Draught-Cattle, of Hunger and Overwork', to the 'Rich, still more wretchedly, of Idleness, Satiety, and Overgrowth.'⁷⁵³ In the years leading up to the New Poor Law of 1834, Carlyle's attention seems to have become increasingly focused on the problem of pauperism. Here, Carlyle again emphasised the question of dependence, and the moral corruption it tended to promote. For instance, in 'Corn-Law Rhymes' (1832), Carlyle described Ebenzer Elliott (the poet whose works he was reviewing) as a 'soul loathing, what true souls ever loathe - Dependence, help from the unworthy to help'. Carlyle then exclaimed:

Must it grow worse and worse till the last brave heart is broken in England; and this same "brave Peasantry" has become a kennel of wild-howling ravenous Paupers!... You may lift the pressure from the free man's shoulders, and bid him go forth rejoicing; but lift the slave's burden, he will only wallow the more composedly in his sloth: a nation of degraded men cannot be raised up, except by what we rightly name a miracle.⁷⁵⁴

As Carlyle remarked in 1831, compared to 'the Want of Work', the 'Want of Wages' was thus 'comparatively trifling'.⁷⁵⁵ In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle reiterated his objections to pauperism, asking why a society that could find a use for any 'full-formed Horse' could not do the same for a 'full-formed Man'.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵²*Sartor Resartus*, 176-177..

⁷⁵³*Sartor Resartus*, 176-177..

⁷⁵⁴'Corn-Law Rhymes' [1832], *CME* IV:230-234.

⁷⁵⁵TC to John A. Carlyle, 17th July 1831, *CL* 5:305.

⁷⁵⁶SR, 174-5

Indeed, Carlyle himself was still a wage-labourer, struggling to eke out a living in the world of commercial book-selling. However, Carlyle now began to interpret his experiences through the Saint-Simonian theory of a 'critical' era, presenting commercial book-selling, like *laissez-faire* more generally, as a transitional stage, through which literature would pass on its way from older forms of aristocratic patronage. As he explained in 'Boswell's Life of Johnson' (1832):

[In the eighteenth century,] Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state; chiefly in this sense, as respects the pecuniary subsistence of its cultivators. It was in the very act of passing from the protection of Patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers... [but this] appears now to have wellnigh discharged *its* functions also.⁷⁵⁷

However, for now, Carlyle still found himself dependent upon the fluctuating fortunes of the market. As he informed Mill towards the end of 1832, 'there are no Books to be written now, unless you have an independent money capital, - which unluckily is not my case at present'.⁷⁵⁸ Similarly, five years later, Carlyle deplored the fact that he might one day find 'work, work in breathless superfluity', only to 'tomorrow' be 'whistled down the wind, left to go and die'.⁷⁵⁹ As before, Carlyle felt his 'dependence' acutely, writing to Mill in 1834:

To enter some Dog's-meat Bazaar; muffled up; perhaps holding your nose, and say: "Here you, Master, able Editor or whatever your name is, will you buy this mess of mine (at so much per pound), and sell it among your Dog's-meat?"—and then having dealt with the able Editor, hurry out again, and wish that it could be kept secret from all men: *this* is the nature of my connexion with Periodicals.⁷⁶⁰

Particularly, Carlyle believed that the author's dependence on selling his labour for a wage tended to degrade the quality of work. As remarked to his brother in 1831: 'Incessant scribbling is inevitable death to Thought: what can grow in the soil of that mind, which must all be *riddled* monthly to see if there are any grains in it that will sell?'.⁷⁶¹ Furthermore, Carlyle also kept up a steady stream of

757'Boswell's Life of Johnson' [1832], *CME* IV:100-101.

758TC to JSM, 19th Nov. 1832, *CL* 6:261.

759TC to JSM, 30th Oct. 1837, *CL* 9:337-338.

760TC to JSM, 20th Jan. 1834, *CL* 7:71, 73.

761TC to John A. Carlyle, 27th Mar. 1831, *CL* 5:254-255.

lamentations regarding puffing.⁷⁶² Finally, Carlyle also pointed out that many periodicals were closely tied to political parties, and that the author, needing to make a sale, was thus continually tempted to compromise his integrity. As Carlyle put it in a letter to Emerson in 1835, 'Radicalism' and 'Conservatism' had become the two 'grand Categories under which all English spiritual activity that so much as thinks remuneration possible must range itself'.⁷⁶³ In 1836, Carlyle was offered a 'Clerkship' by an aristocratic admirer, Basil Montagu, 'at the rate of £200 a-year'. However, he angrily refused, writing to his brother: 'the *faith* of Montague – wishing *me* for his Clerk'.⁷⁶⁴ While the clerkship might have secured him a reliable income, it would have merely served to exchange dependence on the market for dependence on a patron. Thus, as had been the case with the question of pauperism, what Carlyle objected to was not so much poverty, as dependence, and the moral degradation it entailed. This theme would become particularly prominent in Carlyle's first major intervention in British politics, 'Chartism'.

'CHARTISM' (1839)

Having secured his reputation with the *French Revolution*, Carlyle now fixed his attention more squarely on Britain, in an essay entitled 'Chartism' (1839). This brought together many of the Saint-Simonian themes scattered throughout his writings of the previous decade, offering a comprehensive analysis of contemporary Britain as a 'critical' era. Extending his analysis of the French Revolution to Britain, Carlyle argued that Chartism had sprung from 'the bitter discontent grown fierce and mad, the wrong condition therefore or the wrong disposition, of the Working Classes of England'.⁷⁶⁵ Later in the essay, he made the parallel explicit, writing:

Since the year 1789, there is now half-a-century complete; and a French Revolution not yet complete! ... it was a revolt of the oppressed lower classes against the oppressing or neglecting upper classes: not a French revolt only; no, a European one; full of stern monition to all countries of Europe. These Chartisms, Radicalisms, Reform Bill, Tithe Bill, and infinite other discrepancy... are our French Revolution.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶²See *Sartor Resartus*, 11; TC to Macvey Napier, 6th Feb. 1832, *CL* 6:117; TC to John A. Carlyle, 2nd Dec. 1832, *CL* 6:270, 273; TC to JSM, 28th Oct. 1833, *CL* 7:25-26; TC to David Hope, 19th Dec. 1834, *CL* 7:346. See also Emerson's reminiscences of a visit to Carlyle in 1833, in *English Traits* [1856] (Boston MA and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903), 17.

⁷⁶³TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 3rd Feb. 1835, *CL* 8:41-42.

⁷⁶⁴TC to John A. Carlyle, 26th Jan. 1836, *CL* 8:287-288. Carlyle had already been offered, and refused, a pension by Francis Jeffrey. See Jeffrey to Carlyle, 9th / 10th Mar. 1830, in *The Letters of Francis Jeffrey to Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 50, Carlyle's response in *CL* 5:81, and also 'Lord Jeffrey' [1867], in *Reminiscences*, 329.

⁷⁶⁵'Chartism' [Dec. 1839], *CME* VI:110.

⁷⁶⁶'Chartism', 137.

As John Lamb has shown, comparisons between France in 1789 and Britain in 1839 were at the time commonplace.⁷⁶⁷ However, as Lamb also notes, Carlyle himself bore a large part of the responsibility for this fact, having already drawn the analogy in his highly successful *French Revolution* (1837).⁷⁶⁸ Just as Saint-Simon had drawn attention to the 'moral and physical condition of the poorest class', so Carlyle, in 'Chartism', argued that the lot of the working population, or 'Condition-of-England question', was by far the most important challenge facing Britain. Compared to this, conventional parliamentary issues paled into insignificance. Carlyle wrote:

the old grand question, whether A is to be in office or B, with the innumerable subsidiary questions growing out of that, courting paragraphs and suffrages for a blessed solution of that: Canada question, Irish Appropriation question, West-India question, Queen's Bedchamber question; Game Laws, Usury Laws; African Blacks, Hill Coolies, Smithfield cattle, and Dog-carts, - all manner of questions and subjects, except simply this the alpha and omega of all! Surely Honourable Members ought to speak of the Condition-of-England question too.⁷⁶⁹

In analysing the causes of the 'Condition-of-England question', Carlyle, like Sismondi and the Saint-Simonians, emphasised the role of competition and mechanisation in forcing down the wages of labourers. 'The giant Steamengine', Carlyle wrote, will 'here create violent demand for labour, and will here annihilate demand'.⁷⁷⁰ In 'Chartism', Carlyle did not express himself in the form of a treatise on political economy, as historians such as Donald Winch might have wished.⁷⁷¹ Indeed, there was no reason why he should have done, given that he was not a political economist, and it was not his intention to be so. However, Carlyle did draw upon theories that were current amongst serious political economists, such as Sismondi, rendering these in such a way as would appeal to a more general audience. Moreover, Carlyle also considered moral factors to be worthy of consideration. In 1838, he had remarked in conversation regarding the labourers of the North of

⁷⁶⁷For instance, in September 1839, an author in *Blackwood's Magazine* had asked how the British people were "to be saved from the horrors of a convulsion similar to that which, fifty years ago, spread desolation and misery through the whole of France". Cited in John B. Lamb, 'Carlyle's "Chartism", the Rhetoric of Revolution, and the Dream of Empire', in *Victorian Institute Journal*, 23 (1995), 129-150 (134-135).

⁷⁶⁸Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹'Chartism', 112.

⁷⁷⁰'Chartism', 129-130.

⁷⁷¹Winch complains that these passages are deficient as an 'economic diagnosis' (*Wealth and Life*, 45). A. L. Le Quesne made a similar point, claiming that 'Carlyle never showed any interest in economics... [his] analysis... [was] purely moral' (Le Quesne, *Carlyle* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982], 68-69).

England: 'Whether we pay them ill or well, we treat them equally as machines'.⁷⁷² The following year, in 'Chartism', he similarly stated: 'without proper wages there can be no well-being; but with them also there may be none'.⁷⁷³ Indeed, nine months before the publication of 'Chartism', Carlyle had advised a correspondent:

Poverty is no bad companion for a young man; no degree of poverty whatever can permanently hold down a man in wrong courses; nay the best and highest course for a man, where his duty and blessedness do lie, is often enough one of great and greatest poverty.⁷⁷⁴

In 'Chartism', Carlyle's primary concern was thus not poverty as such, but rather dependence on fluctuating market forces, and the moral corruption it entailed. He wrote:

English Commerce with its world-wide convulsive fluctuations, with its immeasurable Proteus Steam-demon, makes all paths uncertain for [working men], all life a bewilderment: sobriety, steadfastness, peaceable continuance, the first blessings of man, are not theirs.⁷⁷⁵

Repeating the Saint-Simonian analysis of *laissez-faire* as a 'critical' phenomenon, Carlyle argued that, while 'in the time of Adam Smith, *Laissez-faire* was a reasonable cry', it had now 'reached the suicidal point', being unable to offer any solution to the sufferings of the working-classes.⁷⁷⁶ Or, as he put it elsewhere in the essay, 'while '*Laissez faire, laissez passer*' was 'orthodox and laudable as a half-truth', it was 'heretical and damnable as a whole truth', in that a lasting solution to the plight of the working classes would require more than to 'button your pockets and stand still'.⁷⁷⁷ In sum, like democracy, *laissez-faire* had already fulfilled its function, and, according to Carlyle, could not solve the 'Condition-of-England question'.

Elsewhere in 'Chartism', Carlyle argued that 'Radicalism' offered no solution to the 'Condition-of-England question'. As Gareth Stedman Jones has noted, radicalism, which tended to ascribe economic problems to political causes, particularly the existence of a corrupt, oligarchic state, and to propose reform of the latter as a solution, had been stretched to breaking point by the

⁷⁷²11th Oct. 1838, in Edward Strachey, 'Some Letters and Conversations of Thomas Carlyle', in *Atlantic Monthly*, 73 (1894), 822-834 (825-826).

⁷⁷³'Chartism', 131-132.

⁷⁷⁴TC to John S. Dwight, 14th Mar. 1839, *CL* 11:58.

⁷⁷⁵'Chartism', 131-132.

⁷⁷⁶'Chartism', 142-146

⁷⁷⁷'Chartism', 119-123.

unprecedented economic crises of the post-war period.⁷⁷⁸ Moreover, the passage of the Reform Act in 1832 had failed to solve problems such as pauperism, with the result that the radical critique of the state came to seem increasingly outdated.⁷⁷⁹ In the years leading up to the publication of 'Chartism', Carlyle had become increasingly inimical towards the so-called Parliamentary Radicals, who had been elected following the promulgation of the Reform Act. For instance, early in 1839, he denounced the 'heartless stupidity' of the Parliamentary Radicals towards 'the working orders of men'.⁷⁸⁰ In 'Chartism', Carlyle made the same point, describing the Parliamentary Radicals as men 'who discern in the misery of the toiling complaining millions not misery, but only a raw-material which can be wrought upon, and traded in, for one's own poor hidebound theories and egoisms'. Having been elected to Parliament by working men, the Radicals then, according to Carlyle, did nothing to help the latter. In this sense, Parliamentary Radicalism might be better termed 'Paralytic Radicalism'.⁷⁸¹ According to Carlyle, what the Radicals had failed to understand was that reform of the oligarchic state would not address the sufferings of the working-classes, which stemmed not from external political interference, but rather from the inner dynamics of the market itself. Thus, their proposed panacea of political reform, and 'extension of the franchise', would do nothing to solve the 'Condition-of-England question'. Hammering the point home, Carlyle declared:

Democracy, take it where you will in our Europe, is found but as a regulated method of rebellion and abrogation; it abrogates the old arrangement of things; and leaves, as we say, *zero* and vacuity for the institution of a new arrangement.⁷⁸²

THE RECEPTION OF 'CHARTISM'

The novelty of Carlyle's arguments was reflected in the fact that several contemporary reviewers were simply unable to make sense of them in terms of conventional political discourse. For instance, a contributor to the *British and Foreign Review* complained that Carlyle's 'political doctrines' were 'not easily to be collected', concluding that 'it is only clear that he is neither Tory, Whig, nor Radical'.⁷⁸³ Even more tortuously, a reviewer writing in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*

⁷⁷⁸Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism', in his *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 90-94, 102-105, 168-169.

⁷⁷⁹Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 188-192.

⁷⁸⁰TC to John A. Carlyle, 26th May 1839, *CL* 11:110-111. See also TC to John Stuart Mill, 9th Oct. 1836, *CL* 9:69-70, TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 5th Dec. 1839, *CL* 11:221-222, and TC to Thomas Ballantyne, 24th Jan. 1840, *CL* 12:23-24.

⁷⁸¹'Chartism', 170-174

⁷⁸²'Chartism', 142-146.

⁷⁸³'Chartism', by Thomas Carlyle, in *The British and Foreign Review*, 12 (1840), 303-335 (312)

described Carlyle as 'a philosophic Ultra-Radical of a new type', 'a Tory Radical', and the proponent of a 'Toryism of a new type', before giving up in exasperation, writing: 'in short, we do not at all times quite understand Mr. Carlyle, and we are far from being satisfied that he perfectly understands himself'.⁷⁸⁴ Most importantly, Carlyle's claims stood in opposition to the beliefs of reformers, Whig, Radical, and Chartist alike, for whom further political reform was seen as a necessary prerequisite to any improvement in the economic and social condition of the nation. As John Burrow has noted, in the decades following the French Revolution, the Whigs had increasingly come to stake their hopes on 'a notion of constitutional adjustment', whereby the franchise would be gradually extended to an ever-larger proportion of the populace, thus avoiding the kind of revolutionary explosion that had devastated France.⁷⁸⁵ Such notions were reflected in a review of Carlyle's 'Chartism' published by Herman Merivale, a professor of political economy at Oxford, in the *Edinburgh Review*, a prominent Whig journal. According to Merivale, while a broadened suffrage might not 'guarantee the toiler against hunger', it did at least serve to 'create a vast and powerful class interested in the maintenance of order'.⁷⁸⁶ This infuriated Carlyle, who surmised the unsigned article to be by the Whig historian Thomas Babington Macaulay. Writing to his brother, Carlyle declaimed:

One thing struck me much in this Macaulay, his theory of *liberal* government. He considers Reform to mean a judicious combining of those that have any money to keep down those that have none. "Hunger" among the great mass is *irremediable*, he says. That the pigs be taught to *die without squealing*: there is the sole improvement possible according to him. Did Whiggery ever express itself in a more damnable manner?⁷⁸⁷

Arguments similar to those of Merivale were also in evidence in a review of 'Chartism' published in the *Monthly Review*. Here, the reviewer conceded that 'the Reform Ministry and the Reform Act have been productive of few practical benefits'. However, in contrast to Carlyle, the reviewer then claimed that the solution lay in further political reforms, which would eventually produce the 'practical benefits' Carlyle desired. He wrote: 'as to the future, the masses must have, along with a sound and anxiously bestowed education, a share in legislation, before we expect that any grand amendment will take place in in their condition'.⁷⁸⁸ Thus, for Whigs, in contrast to Carlyle, political reform continued to take precedence over economic and social affairs.

⁷⁸⁴'Carlyle's Chartistism', in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (1840), 115-120 (115-116)

⁷⁸⁵Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals*, 41.

⁷⁸⁶[Herman Merivale], 'Carlyle on the French Revolution', in *Edinburgh Review*, LXXI (July 1840), 417.

⁷⁸⁷TC to John A. Carlyle, 24th July 1840, *CL* 12:206. See also TC to Alexander Carlyle, 23rd July 1840, *CL* 12:204.

⁷⁸⁸'Carlyle on Chartistism', in *Monthly Review*, 151 (Feb. 1840), 243-253 (253)

The so-called Parliamentary Radicals had been handled particularly roughly by Carlyle, being treated to the sobriquet of 'Paralytic Radicalism'. Early in 1840, Carlyle informed his brother that the *Examiner*, a leading Radical organ, had published 'an angry shot at *Chartism*'.⁷⁸⁹ An unnamed contributor to the paper had deplored Carlyle's belittling of the political reforms sought by the Radicals, writing:

Beware how you talk to a certain sort of men of Corn Laws, Ballot, improvement of the Suffrage, Reform of the Law, Emigration, Education and such topics, they will look at you with supreme pity for your imperfect views, shake their heads... and with a smile of mingled compassion and contempt, tell you that there is but one question of questions, THE CONDITION-OF-ENGLAND QUESTION.

According to the author of the article, the 'havoc which has been made with this one bolt loaded with lead, during the last month, has been a wonder'.⁷⁹⁰ Most importantly, the Radicals took great exception to Carlyle's claim that social problems, such as pauperism, stemmed from the internal logic of the market itself, rather than from the external interference of the state. For instance, somewhat later in 1840, a contributor to *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, another radical journal, argued that 'there is a considerable fallacy in Mr. Carlyle's interpretation of the principle of *Laissez-faire*', continuing:

[The maxim *Laissez-faire* is not one] upon which legislators or governments have ever honestly acted, else we should have had, for example, no Corn Laws, no food imposts, for the benefit of the landed class; no unequal taxation; no restrictions on commerce. The principle of oligarchical governments, instead of being *Laissez-faire*, may be more truly described as the disposition to intermeddle wherever mischief was to be done and advantage obtained for the ruling class.⁷⁹¹

A similar argument was put forward by Thomas Perronet Thompson, a leading Benthamite Radical, in a series of letters addressed to the *Leeds Times* in August 1840. Indeed, Perronet Thompson had already attacked the concept of *laissez-faire* as expressed in the writings of the Saint-Simonians, and it is worth briefly considering this before moving on to look at his reply to Carlyle's 'Chartism'. The Saint-Simonian 'missionaries' had arrived in Britain at the most inopportune moment, namely,

⁷⁸⁹TC to John A. Carlyle, 11th Feb. 1840, *CL* 12:44-45.

⁷⁹⁰'The Newest Quackery', in the *Examiner* (9th Feb. 1840), 82-83.

⁷⁹¹'Carlyle's Chartism', in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (1840), 115-120 (118)

at the height of the agitation in favour of the Reform Bill. While in France, the July Revolution of 1830 had already abolished all prerogatives of birth, in Britain, struggle for reform of the oligarchic, Hanoverian state was at its peak. In this context, British reformers had little time for the Saint-Simonians' argument that economic problems stemmed from the inner logic of the market itself (particularly from competition), and that 'democracy' would thus avail little. Indeed, such arguments would no doubt have seemed divisive and distracting.⁷⁹² Responding to the Saint-Simonians in the Radical *Westminster Review* (Apr. 1832), Perronet Thompson mounted a militant defence not only of *laissez-faire*, but also of the Epicurean, utilitarian theory of sociability that underpinned it. According to Perronet Thompson,

the desire of all men to enjoy is the precise instrument, the very principle of universal gravitation towards the same point, by virtue of which, instead of all things rushing to one common ruin, the circuit of the world is carried on, and the commercial cycle kept in continual generation.

Moreover, Perronet Thompson also sought to minimise the Saint-Simonians' claim that the introduction of machinery led to chronic, large-scale unemployment. In doing so, he cited the example of the printing press, explaining:

the result will be, not that thousands of scribes will be starved, but that there will be a gradual withdrawal of recruits, and in a certain degree of grown men also, from the business of a scribe, and a transfusion into some other, in the same manner as there has been a gradual withdrawal of wig-makers or their offspring from the business of a wig-maker, without any instance of the fields being found strewed as after a battle, with deceased perruquiers.⁷⁹³

Like other reformers, Perronet Thompson here proceeded on the assumption that the market was self-regulating, and that all economic problems were thus attributable to the meddling of the state. As such, the solution to these problems would be political reform, particularly extension of the

⁷⁹²See generally Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 169-187

⁷⁹³[Perronet Thompson], 'Saint-Simonianism, &c.', in *Westminster Review*, XXXII (Apr. 1832), 289-295. As Michael Turner points out, Perronet Thompson, a co-owner of the *Westminster* alongside Bentham and John Bowring, was responsible for most editorial duties, and contributed some 120 articles between 1829 and 1826. He advocated free trade, and attacked Owenism, Saint-Simonism "and all the other -isms" ('Radical Opinion in an Age of Reform: Thomas Perronet Thompson and the *Westminster Review*', in *History*, 281 [2001], 18-40 [24, 37]). For a similar critique of Saint-Simonism, see 'The Rights of Industry and the Banking System', in *Quarterly Review*, XLVII (July 1832), 408-410.

suffrage. Eight years later, Perronet Thompson responded to Carlyle's 'Chartism' in highly similar terms. Like the contributor to *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* mentioned above, Perronet Thompson rejected Carlyle's identification of *laissez-faire* as the cause of the miseries of the working classes, continuing to ascribe the latter to the interference of the oligarchic state. He wrote:

There must be some great mistake or misunderstanding here. When did they ever *let us alone*? The complaint against them is, that their action upon us has been unceasing, premeditated, calculated, for evil... The misgoverning classes have *let nothing and nobody* alone.⁷⁹⁴

In sum, whereas for the Saint-Simonians and Carlyle, the sufferings of the working classes stemmed from the market itself, the Radicals, in contrast, continued to lay the blame on oligarchic political institutions.

The Chartist response to Carlyle's essay seems to have been highly similar to that of the Radicals. As Gareth Stedman Jones made clear some time ago, the early Chartist movement was not, as an older historiographical tradition had it, the first mass expression of modern socialism, but rather the last version of an older 'radical' critique, which focused not on the distinction between 'ruling and exploited classes in an economic sense', but rather on that between 'the beneficiaries and the victims of corruption and monopoly political power'.⁷⁹⁵ In this regard, the Chartists shared much common ground with the Parliamentary Radicals, and this was reflected in their response to Carlyle's essay. Writing in the *Northern Star*, a paper which has been described as the 'guiding light of the national organization',⁷⁹⁶ a Chartist reviewer praised Carlyle's 'admission of distress, and of the right of the people to expect energetic measures to be adopted for its removal or amelioration'.⁷⁹⁷ Indeed, over subsequent years, the Chartists would continue to cite passages from Carlyle that drew attention to the sufferings of the working-classes.⁷⁹⁸ However, beyond this point, Carlyle and the Chartists parted ways. According to the *Northern Star*, Carlyle simply did not understand 'what Chartism is',

⁷⁹⁴Thomas Perronet Thompson, letter to the Editor of the *Leeds Times*, London, 12th Aug. 1840, reprinted in his *Exercises, Political and Others* (London, 1842), V:86-87, 89.

⁷⁹⁵Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism', 168-169.

⁷⁹⁶Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 63

⁷⁹⁷Review of 'The British and Foreign Quarterly Review, or, European Quarterly Journal, no. 24', in *The Northern Star* (6th Nov. 1841), 3.

⁷⁹⁸See for instance 'Thoughts for the Thoughtful', in *The Chartist Circular*, no. 45 (1st Aug. 1840), 184, 'The Atrocious Game Laws: The Morality of Judicial Murder', in *The Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (3rd Feb. 1843), 4, 'Commemoration of the French Republic', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (27th Sep. 1845), 5, and 'The Charter and No Surrender!', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (10th Oct. 1846), 5.

and erred in his estimation of 'the cause of the evil and the true source of the remedy'. Just like the Parliamentary Radicals, the reviewer then argued that the distress of the people was due to the machinations of a corrupt, oligarchic state, and that the remedy to this distress did indeed lie, contrary to Carlyle's claims, in 'extension of the suffrage'.⁷⁹⁹ Thus, like the Whigs and Parliamentary Radicals, the Chartists at this time opposed Carlyle, continuing to focus their criticisms on corrupt political institutions, identified as the cause of economic and social distress, and to lobby for further political reform, which, they assumed, would eventually serve to put an end to this distress. In this sense, they differed fundamentally from Carlyle, who, to use the words of another contemporary reviewer, believed that the discontent of the working classes was 'deeply rooted in the foundations of our social state', in the workings of the market itself, being thus irremediable by political reform alone.⁸⁰⁰

'PAST AND PRESENT' (1843)

As has been seen at the outset of this chapter, the young Carlyle had considered himself a Radical, frequently expressing hostility toward the landed aristocracy. In *Past and Present*, several passages suggest that, even in later life, this hostility had not diminished. Here, Carlyle confronted the question of the 'Corn Laws', a protective tariff that had been imposed on the import of corn, in an attempt to protect the profits of landowners. Stating his opposition, Carlyle declared that 'if I were the Conservative Party of England, I would not for a hundred thousand pounds an hour allow those Corn-Laws to continue!'.⁸⁰¹ For Carlyle, the Corn Laws provided incontrovertible proof of the decadence and corruption of the landed aristocracy, a theme that has already been explored in the previous chapter.⁸⁰² According to Carlyle, 'such a class' was 'transitory, exceptional', and, 'unless Nature's Laws fall dead', could not 'continue'.⁸⁰³ Given the obsolescence of the feudal ruling classes, Carlyle thus endorsed the struggle of the Anti-Corn Law League. In doing so, he again echoed the Saint-Simonian understanding of *laissez-faire* as a negative, 'critical' phenomenon. He wrote: 'Anti-Corn-Law League asks not, Do something; but, Cease your destructive misdoing, Do ye nothing!'⁸⁰⁴

⁷⁹⁹Review of 'The British and Foreign Quarterly Review, or, European Quarterly Journal, no. 24', in *The Northern Star* (6th Nov. 1841), 3. This assessment tallies with the later reminiscences of a leading Chartist, W. J. Linton, who argued that Carlyle, while 'nobly intentioned', had fundamentally failed to grasp what 'Chartism was'. According to Linton, the Chartist movement of this era was 'the plain operation of democracy pure and simple', 'a people's protest against absolutism, monarchical or oligarchical – against privilege and class-legislation'. See W. J. Linton, 'Who Were the Chartists?', in *The Century: Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (Nov. 1881 – Apr. 1882), 421-430 (421-422).

⁸⁰⁰'Chartism and Church Extension', in *The British and Foreign Review*, 11 (1840), 1-31 (2-5)

⁸⁰¹*Past and Present* [1843], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1912), 159.

⁸⁰²See for instance *Past and Present*, 135.

⁸⁰³*Past and Present*, 171-172.

⁸⁰⁴*Past and Present*, 170.

In this sense, Carlyle considered repeal of the Corn Laws and 'Free Trade' not as ends in themselves, but rather as a means to something more. One year after the publication of *Past and Present*, upon being invited to attend a meeting of the Liverpool Anti-Monopoly Association, he replied:

No man wishes better to the cause of free trade - which, indeed, seems to me, in itself, the cause of common sense and common honesty... But, perhaps, we have not yet got at the *whole truth*.⁸⁰⁵

As in 'Chartism', Carlyle's criticisms of the shortcomings of 'free trade' hinged upon the 'Condition-of-England question', or, as he also put it elsewhere in *Past and Present*, 'this grand Problem of the Working Classes of England'.⁸⁰⁶ In the opinion of Carlyle, this had become even more pressing than before. He wrote: 'I will venture to believe that in no time, since the beginnings of Society, was the lot of those same dumb millions of toilers so entirely unbearable as it is even in the days now passing over us'.⁸⁰⁷ Moreover, as Carlyle made clear in a chapter entitled 'Manchester Insurrection', the grievances of the working-classes were entirely justified:

A million of hungry operative men... rose all up, came all out into the streets, and - stood there. What other could they do? Their wrongs and griefs were bitter, insupportable, their rage against the same was just... And this was what these poor Manchester operatives, with all the darkness that was in them and round them, did manage to perform. They put their huge inarticulate question, "What do you mean to do with us?"

According to Carlyle, if England did not 'answer' this 'question', then England would 'perish'.⁸⁰⁸ As in his earlier writings, Carlyle, following Sismondi and the Saint-Simonians, attributed the sufferings of the working classes to over-production and under-consumption, asking:

What is the use of your spun shirts? They hang there by the million unsaleable; and here, by the million, are diligent bare backs that can get no hold of them. Shirts are useful for covering human backs; useless otherwise, an unbearable mockery otherwise.⁸⁰⁹

Later in *Past and Present*, Carlyle satirically remarked that the working classes had been found

805TC to the Chairman of the Liverpool Anti-Monopoly Association, 12th Mar. 1844, *CL* 17:305.

806*Past and Present*, 247-248.

807*Past and Present*, 203.

808*Past and Present*, 16-17.

809*Past and Present*, 21.

'criminally guilty of producing shirts, breeches, hats, shoes and commodities, in a frightful overabundance', and that, as punishment, they would not 'be fed'.⁸¹⁰ In addition to over-production, Carlyle also deplored the persistence of pauperism, writing of those 'twelve hundred thousand workers', 'their cunning right-hand lamed, lying idle in their sorrowful bosom'.⁸¹¹ However, it is again important to recognise that what Carlyle objected to here was not poverty as such, but rather the moral degradation pauperism implied. Referring to the prevalence of pauperism in his native Scotland, he declared:

O, what a waste is there; of noble and thrice-noble national virtues; peasant Stoicisms, Heroisms; valiant manful habits, soul of a Nation's worth, - which all the metal of Potosi cannot purchase back; to which the metal of Potosi, and all you can buy with *it*, is dross and dust!⁸¹²

Indeed, given the arguments that have been made in chapter 1, the references to 'virtue' and 'Stoicism' are significant.

In addition to the plight of the working-classes, Carlyle also identified other shortcomings in the operation of 'free trade'. According to Carlyle, the advocates of the latter erred in assuming that individual self-interest could provide a basis for a cohesive political community. As we have seen, this is an argument that Carlyle had been making for some time. In *Past and Present*, he stated flatly that "‘Laissez-faire,’ ‘Supply-and-demand,’ ‘Cash-payment for the sole nexus,’ and so forth, were not, are not, and will never be, a practicable Law of Union for a Society of Men’."⁸¹³ In the opinion of Carlyle, it would simply not do to 'leave all to egoism, to ravenous greed of money, of pleasure, of applause'.⁸¹⁴ Moreover, Carlyle also argued that political economy, or at least certain strands of political economy as then practised in Britain, sought to apologise for and perpetuate this state of affairs. Noting that the 'Continental people' had begun to import British machinery, in order to 'spin cotton and manufacture for themselves', Carlyle wrote: 'the saddest news is, that we should find our National Existence, as I sometimes hear it said, depend on selling manufactured cotton at a farthing an ell cheaper than any other People'. This, Carlyle opined, was a 'most narrow stand for a great Nation to base itself on'.⁸¹⁵ Here, Carlyle seems to have been referring to an open letter that had

⁸¹⁰*Past and Present*, 164-165.

⁸¹¹*Past and Present*, 2.

⁸¹²*Past and Present*, 3.

⁸¹³*Past and Present*, 32.

⁸¹⁴*Past and Present*, 178.

⁸¹⁵*Past and Present*, 170.

recently been sent by Robert Torrens, a founding member of the Political Economy Club, to Lord Ashley, protesting against the latter's proposed Ten Hours Bill. Torrens told Ashley:

“England possesses no superiority over the United States of North America as regards the advantages, whether natural or acquired, by which the efficacy of industry is increased... America, is our most important market... instead of receiving our fabrics duty free, it charges a duty of forty per cent, upon them, and consequently, to retain that market, our operatives must work equal time and for half the wages. If, therefore, the hours of labour are shortened, wages must fail; and if wages are already at a minimum, we must lose the market altogether... You [Ashley] co-operate with the Government of France in pulling down the greatness of England.”⁸¹⁶

Commenting on this passage, Charles Bray, an Owenite writer to whom we shall shortly return, exclaimed: 'Alas for England, if her greatness is really dependent upon such a policy! Carlyle may well call it “a narrow stand for a free nation to base itself upon”'.⁸¹⁷ Thus, it seems that Carlyle's polemic against political economy in *Past and Present* was not merely a figment of his diseased imagination, but rather had some foundation in reality. 'All this Mammon-Gospel, of Supply-and-demand, Competition, Laissez-faire, and Devil take the hindmost', Carlyle concluded, 'begins to be one of the shabbiest Gospels ever preached on Earth'.⁸¹⁸

In sum, while Carlyle supported the struggle to repeal the Corn Laws, he did not accept that 'Free Trade' constituted an end in itself. What the proponents of *laissez-faire* failed to understand was that the abolition of aristocratic privilege would not solve over-production, pauperism, or social dissolution, all of which sprang not from political interference, but rather from the inner logic of the 'free' market itself. In a particularly striking illustration of this point, which, as we shall see, was frequently picked up by reviewers, Carlyle wrote:

Were the Corn-Laws ended tomorrow, there is nothing yet ended; there is only room made for all manner of things beginning. The Corn-Laws gone, and Trade made free, it is as good as certain this paralysis of industry will pass away. We shall have another period of commercial enterprise, of victory and prosperity; during which, it is likely, much money will

⁸¹⁶Cited in Charles Bray, *An Essay Upon the Union of Agriculture and Manufactures, and Upon the Organization of Industry* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844), 90-92.

⁸¹⁷Ibid.

⁸¹⁸*Past and Present*, 177.

again be made, and all the people may, by the extant methods, still for a space of years, be kept alive and physically fed. The strangling band of Famine will be loosened from our necks; we shall have room again to breathe; time to bethink ourselves, to repent and consider! ... For our new period or paroxysm of commercial prosperity will and can, on the old methods of 'Competition and Devil take the hindmost,' prove but a paroxysm: a new paroxysm, - likely enough, if we do not use it better, to be our *last*.⁸¹⁹

Thus, even if the Corn Laws were to be abolished, it still remained the case, according to Carlyle, that 'with our present system of individual Mammonism, and Government by *Laissez-faire*, this Nation cannot live'.⁸²⁰

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle's treatment of democracy paralleled his treatment of *laissez-faire*. During the preceding years, Carlyle had continued to argue, in line with the teachings of the Saint-Simonians, that democracy played an essential role in the current 'critical' era, dissolving the obsolete institutions of the past, and preparing the way for a new 'organic' future. For instance, in his *Lectures on Heroes* (1840), Carlyle had declared:

All this of Liberty and Equality, Electoral suffrages, Independence and so forth, we will take, therefore, to be a temporary phenomenon, by no means a final one. Though likely to last a long time, with sad enough embroilments for us all, we must welcome it, as the penalty of sins that are past, the pledge of inestimable benefits that are coming.⁸²¹

Similarly, in a series of notes written around the same time as *Past and Present*, Carlyle had remarked that 'even kings do now everywhere begin to see that this Parliament, freedom of debate, ballot, taxing, and such like, will go the round of the world, and cannot by earthly art be hindered from working itself out to a consummation'.⁸²² In *Past and Present* itself, Carlyle repeated this point regarding democracy, arguing that there was nothing the landed aristocracy could do to turn back the tide. As he put it, in characteristically idiosyncratic terms: 'Democracy, the chase of Liberty in that direction, shall go its full course; unrestrainable by [his Excellenz the Titular-Herr Ritter

⁸¹⁹*Past and Present*, 179.

⁸²⁰*Past and Present*, 247-248.

⁸²¹*On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 128.

⁸²²*Historical Sketches of Notable Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I. and Charles I.* [written Oct. 1843 – early 1844], ed. Alexander Carlyle (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899), 336-338.

Kauderwälsch von] Pferdefuss-Quacksalber, or any of *his* household'.⁸²³ However, as in his previous writings, Carlyle then argued that Democracy, the possession of a 'twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver', served only a negative, 'critical' purpose, and, as such, would soon be found wanting by its supporters. 'The Toiling Millions of Mankind', he wrote, 'shall cast away False-Guidance; and hope, for an hour, that No-Guidance will suffice them: but it can be for an hour only.'⁸²⁴

For Carlyle, the fundamental shortcoming of Democracy was similar to that of repeal of the Corn Laws, namely, that it would do nothing to solve the 'Condition-of-England question', which arose not from the existence of political privilege, but rather from the inner dynamic of the market itself. Having foundered upon the 'Condition-of-England question', the traditional radical critique of the oligarchic state was no longer fit for purpose. As Carlyle put it: 'Reform Bill proves to be a failure; Benthamite Radicalism, the gospel of 'Enlightened Selfishness,' dies out, or dwindles into Five-point Chartism'.⁸²⁵ Thus, while 'no-government and Laissez-faire' were certainly preferable to 'misgovernment and Corn-Law', they had clear limitations.⁸²⁶ In sum, in *Past and Present*, Carlyle continued to subscribe to the Saint-Simonian understanding of democracy as a 'critical' means to a new 'organic' future. However, as will be seen in the following section, Carlyle had further refined his assessment of the shortcomings of democracy, particularly through reference to Plato.

PLATO, *PAST AND PRESENT*

In the introduction to his *Lectures on Heroes* (1840), Carlyle had referred to 'that fancy of Plato's, of a man who had grown to maturity in some dark distance, and was brought on a sudden into the upper air to see the sun rise'.⁸²⁷ This 'fancy' occurred in a well-known passage of the *Republic*, in which Plato explained the difference between the philosopher and the common man, using the analogy of a cave. According to Plato, the philosopher, having emerged into the light, and seen the true nature of things, would, upon returning to the cave, be horrified to find the mass of mankind 'fighting one another over shadows'.⁸²⁸ In this section, I want to suggest that Carlyle also drew upon

⁸²³*Past and Present*, 212. Richard Altick suggests this was a reference to the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, who had resigned as Lord-Keeper of the Privy Seal in protest at Peel's wooing of the Anti-Corn Law League (Altick, 'Past and Present: Topicality as Technique', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, ed. J. Clubbe [Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1976], 112-128 [119-120]).

⁸²⁴*Past and Present*, 211-212.

⁸²⁵*Past and Present*, 28.

⁸²⁶*Past and Present*, 170.

⁸²⁷*On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 7-8.

⁸²⁸Plato, *The Republic*, trans. T. Griffiths (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 221-226.

Plato in *Past and Present*, particularly regarding democracy and its shortcomings.⁸²⁹ Indeed, Carlyle would not have been alone in using the writings of the ancient Greeks as a guide to contemporary politics. During the later eighteenth-century, historians such as John Gillies and William Mitford had echoed Plato's denunciations of the Athenian democracy, adducing these as precedents against the French Revolution.⁸³⁰ Moreover, as Frank M. Turner has pointed out, Victorian thinkers struggling to come to terms with the rise of 'democracy' also frequently had recourse to ancient Greek precedents.⁸³¹ These included, for instance, a number of acquaintances of Carlyle, such as Connop Thirlwall and John Forster, both of whom drew upon Plato in their unflattering portrayals of the Athenian democracy.⁸³² This, then, is the context in which the following passages of *Past and Present* should be understood.

As Eric Nelson has recently noted, ancient Greek thinkers such as Plato understood 'freedom' to mean 'the condition of living according to nature'. Moreover, as Nelson points out, it was also 'one of their cardinal assumptions' that the majority of individuals, being slaves to their own selfish passions, did not manage to live in conformity with nature, and could thus hardly be said to be 'free'.⁸³³ The 'Greek' understanding of 'freedom' thus differed significantly from the 'neo-Roman', according to which 'freedom' meant independence from arbitrary power, and active participation by all citizens in the framing of laws.⁸³⁴ In the *Republic*, Plato defined individual freedom in terms of self-mastery, writing:

Self-discipline, I take it, is a kind of order. They say it is a mastery of pleasures and desires, and a person is described as being in some way or other master of himself... What this way of speaking seems to me to indicate is that in the soul of a single person there is a better part

829This might at first seem contentious, given that, in the first edition of the lectures, Carlyle had mistakenly attributed the 'fancy' to Aristotle, informing Joseph Neuberg some years later: 'I read the thing, forty years ago, in some poor Book or other, neither Aristotle nor Plato; and have ignorantly but now irremediably, twisted it to my own uses a little' (TC to Joseph Neuberg, 31st May 1852, *CL* 27:128-134). On the revision of the lectures, and the correction of the mistake, see Mark Engel, 'Collating Carlyle: Patterns of Revision in *Heroes*, *Sartor Resartus*, and *The French Revolution*', in *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, ed. D. R. Sorensen and R. L. Tarr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 240-247 (244-245). However, the parallels between the *Republic* and *Past and Present* are extremely striking, and, as will be seen in the following section, contemporary reviewers were quick to draw attention to them.

830Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 14-15; Kyriakos Demetriou, 'In Defence of the British Constitution: Theoretical Implications of the Debate Over Athenian Democracy in Britain, 1770-1850', *History of Political Thought*, 17:2 (1996) 280-297 (282-286).

831Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 1-5.

832Foster in his 'Socrates and the Sophists of Athens', in *Foreign Quarterly Review*, 30 (1843), and Thirlwall in the early volumes of his *History of Greece* (1834-44). See Kyriakos Demetriou, 'Grote on Socrates: an unpublished essay of the 1820s in its context', in *Dialogos*, 3 (1996), 36-50 (40-42), and Demetriou, 'Bishop Connop Thirlwall: historian of ancient Greece', in *Quaderni di storia*, 56 (2002), 49-90 (70-71).

833Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10-13.

834Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27-30, 36-37, 68-70.

and a worse part. When the naturally better part is in control of the worse, this is what is meant by “master of himself”... But when as a result of bad upbringing or bad company the better element, which is smaller, is overwhelmed by the mass of the worse element, this is a matter for reproach. They call a person in this condition a slave to himself, undisciplined.⁸³⁵

When extended from the individual to the nation as a whole, such an analysis implied extreme suspicion towards democracy, which Plato understood to mean the rule of the ignorant masses over the wise minority.⁸³⁶ He thus compared democracy to a 'mob' of 'desires' seizing 'the young man's soul, realising that it is empty of learning, good habits and true estrangements'.⁸³⁷ In making this point, Plato employed the analogy of the 'ship of state'. He wrote:

The sailors are quarrelling among themselves over captaincy of the ship, each one thinking that he ought to be captain, though he has never learnt that skill... They don't even begin to understand that if he is to be truly fit to take command of a ship a real ship's captain must of necessity be thoroughly familiar with the seasons of the year, the stars in the sky, the winds, and everything to do with his art.⁸³⁸

Plato also reserved particular scorn for the 'highly paid individuals the public calls sophists', who instead of, like the philosopher, endeavouring to teach the public what was true and right, preferred instead to pander to the rabble, believing that the 'opinions' of the latter were equivalent to 'wisdom'.⁸³⁹ Later, Plato referred disparagingly to the sophists, writing: 'when they start claiming that what the public likes really is good or really is beautiful, have you ever heard any of them support that claim with an argument which wasn't laughable?'⁸⁴⁰ In sum, neither the general public nor the sophist saw into the true nature of things, whence it followed that neither was capable of successfully piloting the ship of state.

There is one more passage of the *Republic* that is particularly relevant to understanding Carlyle's

⁸³⁵*Republic*, 124-126

⁸³⁶Since Plato, democracy had been understood as the rule of the ignorant masses at the expense of the commonweal.

See Russell L. Hanson, 'Democracy', in *Political innovation and conceptual change*, ed. Ball and Farr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 68-89.

⁸³⁷*Republic*, 266-273

⁸³⁸*Republic*, 191-192

⁸³⁹*Republic*, 196-197. Quentin Skinner notes that Socrates and Plato considered sophistry (and rhetoric more generally) to be an attempt to arouse the passions and emotions of an audience. In this sense, it was opposed to reason. See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 100-101, 121-123

⁸⁴⁰*Republic*, 196-197

criticisms of democracy in *Past and Present*. Here, Plato argued that tinkering with institutions would in itself provide no solutions to the problems of a community, the latter being deeply rooted in the bad habits of the people as a whole. Using the metaphor of the body politic, Plato compared a people that put its faith in institutional reforms to

those people who are ill, and who lack the self-discipline required to give up their unhealthy way of life... What a delightful life those people lead! Their medical treatment achieves nothing, except to increase the complications and severity of their ailments, yet they live in constant hope that each new medicine recommended will be the one which will make them healthy.

According to Plato, such people reserved 'their greatest hostility for the person who tells them the truth, which is that until they give up drinking, over-eating, sex and idleness, no medicine, cauterisation or surgery, no charms, amulets, or anything of that kind, will do them the slightest good'. To the contrary, they would heed only the medical sophist, 'the person who takes the city as it is, who is the people's most beguiling servant and flatterer, who creeps into their good graces, who anticipates their wishes and is adept at satisfying them – this person they will declare a fine man, a man profoundly wise'. However, this was ultimately self-defeating. Just as no number of medical treatments would counteract the unhealthy lifestyle of an individual, so no manner of 'passing and amending' laws would compensate for the corrupt and vicious habits of a community. Indeed, according to Plato, this would amount to little more than 'cutting off the Hydra's head'.⁸⁴¹

In *Past and Present*, and particularly in Book I, Carlyle echoed Plato's definition of freedom as a life lived in accordance with the laws of nature. Indeed, this would have been entirely compatible with Carlyle's Stoicism (as already explored in chapter 1), according to which freedom consisted in submission to the laws of necessity. For Carlyle, as for Plato, such a definition of freedom was equally relevant to both individuals and political communities. In Book I, Carlyle thus sought to remind his contemporaries of such eternal verities, warning them that 'this Universe *has* its Laws. If we walk according to the Law, the Law-Maker will befriend us; if not, not'.⁸⁴² Later in *Past and Present*, Carlyle returned to this theme, again arguing that individuals and states departed from the laws of nature at their peril. He wrote:

⁸⁴¹*Republic*, 118-120.

⁸⁴²*Past and Present*, 22-25.

Nature's Laws, I must repeat, are eternal: her small still voice, speaking from the inmost heart of us, shall not, under terrible penalties, be disregarded. No one man can depart from the truth without damage to himself; no one million of men; no Twenty-seven Millions of men.⁸⁴³

Carlyle then repeated his definition of individual liberty as liberty from the rule of one's own passions, asking: 'from all men thou art emancipated: but from Thyself and from the Devil- ?'. Continuing, he explained that 'there is, at any given moment, a *best path* for every man; a thing which, here and now, it were of all things wisest for him to do', and that 'whatsoever hinders him, were it wardmotes, open-vestries, pollbooths, tremendous cheers, rivers of heavy-wet, is slavery'. Particularly, Carlyle regarded the frenzied pursuit of money as a form of slavery, asking if it would not be good for some 'tyranny' to 'check' the 'unreposing Mammon-worshipper' in his 'mad path'.⁸⁴⁴ What was true of individuals was equally true of nations, of those

Twenty-seven Millions travelling on such courses, with gold jingling in every pocket, with vivats heaven-high, [who] are incessantly advancing, let me again remind thee, towards the *firm-land's end*, - towards the end and extinction of what Faithfulness, Veracity, real Worth, was in their way of life... O, it is frightful when a whole Nation, as our Fathers used to say, has 'forgotten God;' has remembered only Mammon, and what Mammon leads to!⁸⁴⁵

For Carlyle, as for Plato, the opinion of the general public was not synonymous with wisdom, that is, with insight into the true nature of things. In this sense, democracy in itself offered no solutions. Here, Carlyle frequently had recourse to Plato's analogy of the ship of state, simultaneously translating Plato's point about the sophists into Carlylese. According to Carlyle, the modern parliamentarian, 'Sir Jabesh Windbag', was

strong only in the faith that Paragraphs and Plausibilities bring votes; that Force of Public Opinion, as he calls it, is the primal Necessity of Things, and highest God we have... He is a Columbus minded to sail to the indistinct country of NOWHERE... [and] he will infallibly *arrive* at that same country of NOWHERE... In the Ocean Abysses and Locker of Davy Jones, there certainly enough do he and *his* ship's company, and all their cargo and

⁸⁴³*Past and Present*, 139.

⁸⁴⁴*Past and Present*, 210-211.

⁸⁴⁵*Past and Present*, 139.

navigatings, at last find lodgement.⁸⁴⁶

As has been seen, the young Carlyle had frequently stressed the importance of virtue and public spirit in sustaining a political community. In *Past and Present*, Carlyle made the same point, rehearsing Plato's medical analogy almost to the letter. Arguing that no 'Act of Parliament' would ever remedy the disease of Mammon-worship, he wrote:

Brothers, I am sorry I have got no Morrison's Pill for curing the maladies of Society... There will no 'thing' be done that will cure you. There will a radical universal alteration of your regimen and way of life take place; there will a most agonising divorce between you and your chimeras, luxuries and falsities, take place; a most toilsome, all but 'impossible' return to Nature, and her veracities, and her integrities, take place: that so the inner fountains of life may again begin, like eternal Light-fountains, to irradiate and purify your bloated, swollen, foul existence, drawing nigh, as at present, to nameless death!⁸⁴⁷

As Richard Lewis Nettleship later pointed out in his *Lectures on the Republic*, in both Plato and Carlyle, the 'thought and the metaphor are the same'.⁸⁴⁸ Thus, according to Carlyle, those who put their faith in parliamentary reform had set themselves the following impossible task: 'Given a world of Knaves to produce an Honesty from their united action!'. Such a 'distillation', Carlyle noted, was 'not possible'.⁸⁴⁹ In sum, in *Past and Present*, Carlyle continued to believe that, while Democracy was a necessary 'critical' phenomenon, clearing away the obsolete institutions of the past, it was not itself the final destination of mankind. In refining his assessment of the shortcomings of democracy, Carlyle drew substantially on Plato's *Republic*, rehearsing many of the opinions he and earlier expressed regarding the importance of virtue to a political community. The result was, we might say, a sort of Platonised Saint-Simonism.

Indeed, several reviewers recognised the Platonic inspiration of Carlyle's text. For instance, a contributor to the *Athenæum* explained that the 'sum of Mr. Carlyle's argument is this, that the European world is sinking into anarchy, because men have deserted truth for appearances, and because they want faith in certain Platonisms'. Moreover, like Plato, Carlyle believed that 'each man

⁸⁴⁶*Past and Present*, 215.

⁸⁴⁷*Past and Present*, 22-25. As Altick points out, 'Morrison's Pills' had acquired fame through extravagant advertising campaigns, as well as several court cases resulting from fatalities caused by overdoses (Altick, 'Past and Present: Topicality as Technique', 118).

⁸⁴⁸Richard Lewis Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London: Macmillan and Co. 1906), 142-143.

⁸⁴⁹*Past and Present*, 22-25.

should reform himself; should take to believing in universals, in order that he may abandon false and apparent goods, and embrace only such objects as are really worth pursuing'.⁸⁵⁰ For its part, the *Times* accused Carlyle of having resurrected the political theories of the 'greatest of heathen philosophers', drawing particular attention to the chapter of *Past and Present* entitled 'Morrison's Pills', already cited above.⁸⁵¹ However, these reviewers censored Carlyle, arguing that the political philosophies of antiquity were of little relevance to the needs of a modern, commercial society. For example, the *Athenæum*'s reviewer dismissed Carlyle's preference for 'universals' over 'false and apparent goods', arguing that the political philosophy of the ancients had been unable to free them from 'endless retracings of the same labyrinth, revolutions in the same vicious circle', whereas 'Mr. Carlyle's bugbears "political economy, and the *laissez-faire*" may be small and inefficient steps in the highway of progress; but they are steps'.⁸⁵² The *Times*'s reviewer pursued a similar strategy, arguing that the Platonic emphasis on the 'laws of the universe', and the importance of the moral character of individuals in sustaining political institutions, was far removed from the more modest concerns of the contemporary legislator. According to the reviewer:

The science of politics in the present day is widely different from the theories of heathen philosophers. It is eminently a *practical* science... ... [the] business [of the statesman] is to act with the materials that are given him, not to speculate about the laws of the universe, about which he can know but little, and is not concerned to know much.⁸⁵³

In sum, while both these reviewers recognised Carlyle's debts to Plato and the *Republic*, they dismissed the latter as irrelevant to the needs of modern commercial societies. However, as the following section will suggest, *Past and Present* received a somewhat more sympathetic reception in other quarters.

'ONE-HALF A GREAT MAN, ONE-HALF A GREAT HUMBUG': CHARTISM ON *PAST AND PRESENT*

A significant shift occurred in the Chartist response to Carlyle during the 1840s. As has already been noted above, the early Chartist movement was heir to a long-standing 'radical' tradition, more concerned with politics than with economics. In this tradition, to use the words of Gareth Stedman

⁸⁵⁰"Past and Present. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The Athenæum*, no. 812 (20th May 1843), 480-481 (481).

⁸⁵¹Review of 'Past and Present', in *The Times* (6th Oct. 1843), 3.

⁸⁵²"Past and Present. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The Athenæum*, no. 812 (20th May 1843), 480-481 (481).

⁸⁵³Review of 'Past and Present', in *The Times* (6th Oct. 1843), 3.

Jones, 'the dividing line between classes was not that between employer and employed, but that between the represented and unrepresented'.⁸⁵⁴ However, Chartist discourse underwent a significant transformation during the 1840s. In particular, it became increasingly difficult to ascribe the unprecedented economic and social crises of these years to the shortcomings of the oligarchic, Hanoverian state. As Gregory Claeys has demonstrated, the Chartists thus increasingly had recourse to the ideas of Robert Owen, who had portrayed economic distress as a consequence of competition and mechanisation, rather than political oppression.⁸⁵⁵ In the process, the Chartists also made concessions to the Owenite understanding of class, which focused more on divisions between employers and employed than those between represented and unrepresented.⁸⁵⁶ More recently, this analysis has been further developed by Margot Finn, who points out that this heightened awareness of class was further reinforced by the rise of the Anti-Corn Law League, 'a formative moment in the consolidation of a middle-class consciousness'. According to the League, which was led primarily by large manufacturers and employers, the repeal of the Corn Laws (finally enacted in 1846) would serve to cheapen foodstuffs, and thus raise the living standards of the working classes. However, the Chartists were unconvinced, believing that the League would use repeal as an excuse to cut workers' wages. They thus frequently disrupted the meetings of the League, a tactic which, to use Finn's phrase, 'drove a wedge between middle- and working-class reformers'.⁸⁵⁷

Through an analysis of the *Northern Star*, this section will suggest that the Saint-Simonian-inspired writings of Carlyle provided another crucial resource for the Chartists during these years. Whereas the *Star* had previously rejected the analysis put forward by Carlyle in 'Chartism' (1839), over the following decade, it increasingly came to embrace many of his arguments. This was particularly true of the opinions that Carlyle had expressed in relation to the Corn Laws in *Past and Present*. To recap, Carlyle had argued that, whatever short-term benefits the repeal of the Corn Laws might bring to employers, it would provide no lasting solution to the sufferings of the working classes, which stemmed ultimately from the inner logic of the 'free' market (*laissez-faire*) itself, not from bad laws. It was perhaps this argument to which John Forster was referring when he wrote in the *Examiner* of Carlyle's 'perpetual settings forth of class against class'.⁸⁵⁸ Despite the disapproval of reviewers such as Forster, the Chartists seem to have seized eagerly upon Carlyle's

854Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism', 106-107.

855Gregory Claeys, *Citizens and Saints: Politics and Anti-Politics in Early British Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 244-247.

856Claeys, *Citizens and Saints*, 183.

857Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 57-59.

858John Forster, review of 'Past and Present', in *The Examiner*, no. 1839 (Apr. 1843), 259-261.

argument. In 1843, a meeting took place in Sheffield to demand the release from prison of Richard Oastler, the factory reform campaigner. Both Chartists and members of the Anti-Corn Law League took part, but tensions soon came to a head, and the following remarkable scene occurred (as reported in the *Northern Star*):

[The local Chartist leader Isaac Ironside mounted the stage:] “Mr. I then read some extracts from Carlyle's “Past and Present,” on the subject of foreign competition, and concluded by saying if the League would pull down their banners of patriotism, benevolence, and regard for the poor, and hoist in their stead... “Lord love you, we're all for ourselves,” he would say no more against them – (loud cheers and hisses).... the freebooters were smarting with rage from the castigation they had just received, and it was some time before they would allow him to proceed. A Chartist in the gallery remonstrated with some of the *gentlemen* for their bad manners, when one of them struck him. A regular row ensued, and the gentlemen (?) received their *quietus*.⁸⁵⁹

Following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the *Northern Star* rehearsed the analysis that Carlyle had put forward three years earlier in *Past and Present*. According to the paper, the recent 'Corn Bill' had finally put an end to 'territorial feudalism', and 'the great controversy which has for many years been waged between the Mill-owner and the Landowner'. However, its true value lay in 'dissipating a gross delusion shared in by many otherwise well-informed persons', namely, that 'low wages, squalid abodes, rags and poverty' were the effects of 'a monopoly in Food, the vicious effects of the vicious principle of Protection'. Despite the repeal of the Corn Laws, 'low wages, wretched dwellings, dirt, squalor, famine, and disease' still existed, and could thus 'no longer be attributed to the wrong cause'. Continuing, the paper argued that now that the struggle against the 'Landlords' was over, the struggle against 'the Mill-lords – the Money-lords' would begin. Concluding, the author cited a passage from *Past and Present* that we have already encountered above:

We cannot better close these observations, than by the following quotation from Thomas Carlyle, written in 1843: it possesses that truth and applicability to the present moment, which characterises the production of genius and profound research into the causes and remedies of social and political evil... “The Corn-Laws gone, and Trade made free, it is as

859'Sheffield – Great Meeting of the Friends of Mr. Oastler, and Glorious Triumph over the “Freebooters”’, in *The Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (6th Jan. 1843), 3.

good as certain this paralysis of industry will pass away. We shall have another period of commercial enterprise, of victory and prosperity; during which, it is likely, much money will again be made, and all the people may, by the extant methods, still for a space of years, be kept alive and physically fed. The strangling band of Famine will be loosened from our necks; we shall have room again to breathe; time to bethink ourselves, to repent and consider! ... For our new period or paroxysm of commercial prosperity will and can, on the old methods of 'Competition and Devil take the hindmost,' prove but a paroxysm: a new paroxysm, - likely enough, if we do not use it better, to be our *last*".

The *Northern Star* thus seems to have by this point substantially embraced Carlyle's analysis of *laissez-faire* and the Corn Laws, as well as many of his ideas regarding class.⁸⁶⁰ The following year, the paper celebrated the successful second reading of the Ten Hours' Bill in the House of Lords, noting that 'only eleven peers' had supported 'the *laissez-faire* principle', the "shabbiest of gospels that ever was preached", 'as Carlyle pithily describes it'. Concluding, the paper also echoed Carlyle's analysis of political economy, declaring:

Legislators and people are willing to believe that there are more things, and important ones too, than in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in the merely commercial philosophy of Adam Smith and his disciples... The Ten Hours' Bill will become the law of the land, and lay the foundation of a wiser, more human, and more prosperous system of legislation than the present, which proceeds upon the principle that universal and undisguised selfishness is best calculated to promote the well-being of the community.⁸⁶¹

However, despite this rapprochement, it is important to note that there was still one important difference of opinion. While the *Northern Star* might have accepted much of Carlyle's economic and social analysis, it still clung to the idea of a '*Reformed* House of Commons'.⁸⁶² According to one contributor, Carlyle was thus 'one-half a great man, and one-half a great humbug'.⁸⁶³ Nonetheless, as the following section shall suggest, the Chartists' increasingly sympathetic response to Carlyle was paralleled in the writings of an Owenite already passingly referred to above, namely, Charles Bray.

860'Retrospect of the Session', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (5th Sep. 1846), 5.

861[Untitled], in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (22nd May 1847), 5.

862'Retrospect of the Session', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (5th Sep. 1846), 5.

863Review of 'The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review (July)', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (24th July 1847), 3.

As Gregory Claeys has shown, Robert Owen and his followers had sought to 'demonstrate that radicalism relied far too heavily upon an outmoded conception of the relationship between government and the economy'. According to the Owenites, the radicals were mistaken in their belief that political reform would restore economic prosperity, and lacked a clear analysis of competition and mechanisation, the true causes of poverty.⁸⁶⁴ Moreover, the Owenites took a similar approach to the Corn Laws, arguing that repeal would not put an end to competition, and would thus provide no lasting solution to the problem of poverty.⁸⁶⁵ In this sense, Owen and Carlyle's arguments shared a common thrust, and it is thus perhaps not altogether surprising that one prominent Owenite, Charles Bray, sought to combine the ideas of the two men, particularly in his *Essay Upon the Union of Agriculture and Manufactures* (1844). Bray began by invoking Carlyle's phrase 'the Condition-of-England question'.⁸⁶⁶ Like Owen and Carlyle, Bray placed great emphasis on the pernicious effects of unregulated mechanisation and competition. Particularly, mechanisation served to increase production, which in turn intensified competition between manufacturers to sell their products, thus lowering prices, and thus profits. The 'profits of the manufacturer being low', he endeavoured to live by reducing 'the wages of the artisan'. However, the artisan being also a consumer, this tended to lower demand, thus depressing prices yet further, and, in turn, profits. The result, in Bray's words, was that 'universal abundance coexists with individual want', and that 'particular countries might become filled with produce of which no one should be at liberty to make use'. In support of his thesis, Bray quoted the third chapter of Carlyle's *Past and Present*:

“The world, with its Wealth of Nations, Supply-and-demand and such like, has of late days been terribly inattentive to that question of work and wages... has merely left them to be scrambled for by the Law of the Stronger, law of Supply-and-demand, law of Laissez-faire... And now the world will have to pause a little, and take up that other side of the problem... For it has become pressing. What is the use of your spun shirts? They hang there by the million unsaleable; and here, by the million, are diligent bare backs that can get no hold of them”.

According to Bray, this state of affairs demonstrated the falsity of claims made by 'Political

⁸⁶⁴Claeys, *Citizens and Saints*, 142. See also p. 150-152.

⁸⁶⁵Gregory Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium: From Moral Economy to Socialism, 1815-1860* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), 141-144.

⁸⁶⁶Bray, *Essay*, 6.

Economists', such as 'Ricardo, Say, and Mill', to the effect that there could be no such thing as 'a glut in the general market of production'. As Bray remarked, 'it would be very difficult to convince the manufacturers of Paisley and Glasgow, of Manchester and Leeds, that over-production is impossible: however strong the reasoning, they would think the fact still stronger'.⁸⁶⁷

Interestingly, Bray seemed to share Carlyle's belief that, with regard to the 'Condition-of-England question', the issue was not only poverty, but also dependence on fluctuating market forces, and the moral corruption this engendered. According to Bray, 'labourers and artisans' had 'been divorced from the soil and made solely dependent upon the sale of their labour, the demand for which is dependent upon fluctuating causes, and will therefore frequently not furnish them with the necessities of life'. The result was that 'the operatives' had become 'slaves to the necessity of living'.⁸⁶⁸ Elsewhere in the *Essay*, Bray cited Archibald Alison's *The Principles of Population* (1840):

Mr. Alison says, "Of all the effects which the progress of civilization produces, there is none so deplorable as the degradation of the human character which arises from the habits of the manufacturing classes... It seems the peculiar effect of such debasing employments, to render the condition of men more precarious at the same time that it makes their habits irregular; to subject them at once to the most trying fluctuations of condition, and the most fatal improvidence of character".⁸⁶⁹

In addition to the moral degradation of the individuals who composed the labouring class, Bray, like Carlyle, also feared that such tendencies would in the long-run also serve to undermine the cohesion, and eventually the very existence, of the nation as a whole. In the *Essay*, he looked forward to a time when:

We may... perhaps discover that our national existence does not depend upon our selling manufactured cotton at a farthing per ell cheaper than any other people. As Carlyle says, "a most narrow stand for a free nation to base itself on – a stand which, with all the corn-law abrogations conceivable, I do not think will be capable of enduring".⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁷Bray, *Essay*, 24-30.

⁸⁶⁸Bray, *Essay*, 78-82.

⁸⁶⁹Bray, *Essay*, 19-20.

⁸⁷⁰Bray, *Essay*, 87-89.

In his preface, Bray had explained that his *Essay* had also been published in the form of an 'Introductory Essay' to another publication, entitled *An Outline of the various Social Systems and Communities which have been founded on the principle of Co-operation* (1844).⁸⁷¹ Interestingly, this latter work contained a long, sympathetic account of the doctrines of the Saint-Simonians, including their idea of a 'critical' era.⁸⁷² In the *Essay*, Bray seemed to imply that Carlyle had taken on the role of advocating Saint-Simonian ideas to the British public, and particularly the notion that the sufferings of the working classes stemmed from the logic of the market itself, rather than from bad laws. He wrote:

The Continental writers have long been aware that no more favourable results can be effected by our present policy, and perhaps we may class it among our brightest grounds for hope that some of our own most enlightened writers and philanthropists – men who have the public ear – are endeavouring to make their countrymen sensible of it too. In Thomas Carlyle's phraseology, "All this mammon-gospel of supply-and-demand, competition, laissez-faire, and devil take the hindmost, begins to be one of the shabbiest gospels ever preached on earth... The Corn-Laws gone, and Trade made free, it is as good as certain this paralysis of industry will pass away. We shall have another period of commercial enterprise, of victory and prosperity... The strangling band of Famine will be loosened from our necks; we shall have room again to breathe; time to bethink ourselves, to repent and consider! ... For our new period or paroxysm of commercial prosperity will and can, on the old methods of 'Competition and Devil take the hindmost,' prove but a paroxysm: a new paroxysm, - likely enough, if we do not use it better, to be our *last*".⁸⁷³

Following its publication in 1844, Bray's book received a ringing endorsement from the *Northern Star*. According to the paper, 'no work extant is better calculated to unfold a knowledge of the causes of our social evils', and, for this reason, 'no Chartist lecturer or leader should be without this essay'. Significantly, the review of Bray's work also reproduced in full the long quotation from *Past and Present* regarding the Corn Laws.⁸⁷⁴ Viewed alongside the other evidence explored in the previous two sections, this all rather suggests that the 1840s saw an increasing blurring of the

⁸⁷¹Bray, *Essay*, 3.

⁸⁷²On the Saint-Simonians, see Mary Hennell, *An Outline of the Various Social Systems & Communities Which Have Been Founded on the Principle of Co-operation. With an Introductory Essay by the Author of "The Philosophy of Necessity"* [i.e. Charles Bray] (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844), 99-121.

⁸⁷³Bray, *Essay*, 101-105.

⁸⁷⁴Review of Charles Bray, 'An Essay Upon the Union of Agriculture and Manufactures, and Upon the Organization of Industry', in *The Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (28th Sep. 1844), 3.

boundaries between Carlylian, Owenite, and Chartist discourses, and the emergence of a consensus that the internal logic of the market itself, rather than the laws and institutions of the oligarchic state, was to blame for the condition of the working classes. As we shall see, this rapprochement would be further encouraged by the events of 1848.

LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETEER: CARLYLE DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY YEARS (1848-1852)

As has been seen in earlier sections, Carlyle had consistently subscribed to the Saint-Simonian understanding of *laissez-faire* as a necessary, 'critical' phenomenon, preparing the way for the instauration of a new 'organic' era. However, the violence of Carlyle's polemic against *laissez-faire* in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) might tempt us to conclude that he had now come to reject it altogether. However, as a letter written shortly after the publication of the *Pamphlets*, early in 1852, makes clear, this was not the case. Here, Carlyle again reiterated the Saint-Simonian concept of *laissez-faire*, explaining:

Free-trade... is by no means the ultimatum one aspires to, or the perfect condition that will satisfy the world... But surely in all cases... free trade is better than trade unjustly crippled by monopolies... in present circumstances, free trade were a clear improvement; and moreover, in the actual disposition of the world, it is a first stage thro' which all faulty things must pass, and only beyond and after trial of which can any progress that will prove true and lasting be looked for.⁸⁷⁵

Thus, even after the publication of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle made clear that he did not reject *laissez-faire* outright, continuing to view it as a necessary, indispensable, 'critical' phenomenon. However, in the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle mounted a frontal assault on the shortcomings of *laissez-faire*, and particularly its effects upon the working classes. In the first of the *Pamphlets*, 'The Present Time', he wrote of:

Supply-and-demand, Leave-it-alone, Voluntary-Principle, Time will mend it: - till British industrial existence seems fast becoming one huge poison-swamp of reeking pestilence physical and moral... Slop-shirts attainable halfpence cheaper, by the ruin of living bodies

⁸⁷⁵TC to John Chapman, 3rd May 1852, CL 27:99-102.

and immortal souls.⁸⁷⁶

In addition to the sufferings of the working-classes, Carlyle again turned his sights on pauperism. As before, his objections to the latter centred on the moral degradation, or 'slavishness', it implied. However, Carlyle now also argued that pauperism, if allowed to continue to spread, would gradually sap the foundations of the whole community. Again using the metaphor of the 'ship of state', he wrote:

Pauperism is the general leakage through every joint of the ship that is rotten. Were all men doing their duty, or even seriously trying to do it, there would be no Pauper... The Idle Workhouse, now about to burst of overfilling, what is it but the scandalous poison-tank of drainage from the universal Stygian quagmire of our affairs? Workhouse Paupers; immortal sons of Adam rotted into that scandalous condition, subter-slavish... My friends, I perceive the quagmire must be drained, or we cannot live.⁸⁷⁷

Indeed, according to Carlyle, the ship of state was also being rotted through by the selfishness and greed that *laissez-faire* tended to promote. Repeating his point that individual self-interest could not in itself sustain a political community, Carlyle declared that the 'Universe' would 'not carry on its divine bosom any commonwealth of mortals that have no higher aim' than 'to make money and spend it'.⁸⁷⁸ As an illustration of his thesis, Carlyle cited the United States. According to Carlyle, the American populace was entirely given over to the pursuit of 'Cotton-crops and Indian-corn and dollars'. With its individual inhabitants caring only for their themselves, and being utterly devoid of all public spirit, the United States could thus hardly justify its claim to be a "Model Republic". To the contrary, Carlyle wrote, 'the title hitherto to be a Commonwealth or Nation at all, among the ἔθνη [*éthni*] of the world, is, strictly considered, still a thing they are but striving for, and indeed have not yet done much towards attaining'. Rather than a "Model Republic", the United States, as the apotheosis of *laissez-faire*, would thus better be understood as 'Anarchy *plus* a street-constable'.⁸⁷⁹ As the use of ancient Greek, the term 'Commonwealth', and the classical metaphor of the 'ship of state' suggest, Carlyle was here making a broadly republican argument about the

876'The Present Time' [Feb. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter*, Copyright edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1897), 49-51.

877'The New Downing Street', 147-148.

878'The Present Time', 42.

879'The Present Time', 43. One American reviewer remarked: 'His whole paragraph on America is so narrow, illiberal and feeble that we wonder at reading such opinions from such a writer'. See 'Thomas Carlyle and his "Latter-Day Pamphlets"', in *Southern Literary Messenger*, 16 (June 1850), 330-340 (334).

socially corrosive effects of selfishness and greed.

In the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle's criticisms of *laissez-faire* and pauperism converged in a polemic against the 'philanthropic' movement. As has been seen, one of Carlyle's crucial arguments was that pauperism stemmed from the inner logic of the market itself, particularly from competition. Given the fact that private charity did nothing to modify this logic, it would provide no lasting solution to the problem of pauperism. As Carlyle put it, the 'general well and cesspool once baled clean out today, will begin before night to fill itself anew'.⁸⁸⁰ Indeed, in the 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question' (1849), Carlyle had identified private charity as the complement of *laissez-faire*, writing of 'these two, Exeter-Hall Philanthropy and the Dismal-Science'.⁸⁸¹ Thus, for Carlyle, 'private charity' would never compensate for the 'universal neglect of the clearest public duties'.⁸⁸² However, there was another prong to Carlyle's argument. As has been seen, Carlyle's central concern regarding pauperism was not poverty as such, but rather dependence, and the moral corruption it entailed. In treating the poor as passive victims, and showering them with money and handouts, the philanthropic movement simply reinforced their dependence, and thus their moral degradation. As one reviewer put it, what Carlyle objected to was an 'ill-judged squandering of money, by which idleness is created and perpetuated'.⁸⁸³ In particular, Carlyle took umbrage at the phenomenon of 'model prisons', in which criminals were absolved of responsibility for their crimes, and treated as if they were victims. According to Carlyle, such attempts to 'cure a world's woes by rose-water' would 'only make bad worse'.⁸⁸⁴ Noting the sheer vehemence of Carlyle's polemic, Ian Campbell claims that 'to dismiss the inhabitants of the prisons as "thrifless sweepings of Creation", let alone "Devil's regiments", is not the most constructive of attitudes'.⁸⁸⁵ However, it is important to understand that, for Carlyle, 'constructive attitudes' ought not to be squandered on criminals. Asking what kind of 'reformers' chose to 'work only on the rotten material', Carlyle argued that attention ought to be concentrated not on the criminal classes, but rather on the working-classes, who still possessed some shred of moral fibre.⁸⁸⁶ As he put it: 'If I had a commonwealth to reform or to govern, certainly it should not be the Devil's regiments of the line that I would first of all concentrate my attention on!'.⁸⁸⁷ Interestingly, in making this point, Carlyle seems to have adapted passages from Eugène Sue's novel *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-1843), which, as Anne-Marie

880'The Present Time', 49.

881'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XL (Dec. 1849), 672.

882'Model Prisons' [Mar. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 65-67.

883'Thomas Carlyle and John Howard', in *Fraser's Magazine*, 41 (Apr. 1850), 406-410 (410).

884'Model Prisons' [Mar. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 65-67.

885Ian Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle* [1974], new ed. (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 1993), 121.

886'Model Prisons', 75.

887'Model Prisons', 73-75.

Thiesse has pointed out, drew much of its inspiration from Saint-Simonism, particularly regarding the need to improve the moral and physical condition of the largest and most numerous class.⁸⁸⁸ In the *Mystères*, Sue wrote:

We expect prisons to be sad, sordid, squalid, and dingy, and are therefore surprised at the sight of these establishments, which bring together all the conditions of well-being and good hygiene... What are really sad, sordid, squalid, and dingy, are the garrets in which poor but honest workers languish, exhausted and despairing, powerless to relieve the suffering of their diseased, shivering, and malnourished children.⁸⁸⁹

In Carlyle's pamphlet on 'Model Prisons', we read:

all round this beautiful Establishment, or Oasis of Purity, intended for the Devil's regiments of the line, lay continents of dingy poor and dirty dwellings, where the unfortunate not *yet* enlisted into that Force were struggling manifoldly, - in their workshops, in their marble-yards and timber-yards and tan-yards, in their close cellars, cobbler-stalls, hungry garrets.⁸⁹⁰

Until now, this has passed unnoticed by scholars. The point, however, is that Carlyle's rejection of private philanthropy followed from his analysis of pauperism and dependence, and his identification of the condition of the working-classes as the most important question in contemporary politics.⁸⁹¹ And this was very much a belief he held in common with Sue. As the *Leader* remarked upon Sue's election to the French Assembly in April 1850, a month after the appearance of Carlyle's *Pamphlet*

888 Anne-Marie Thiesse, 'La chaire de l'utopie, ou: la vulgarisation de la pensée saint-simonienne dans les romans d'Eugène Sue', in *Regards sur le saint-simonisme et les saint-simoniens*, ed. Derré (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), 143-160. As Berry Palmer Chevasco has recently demonstrated, by 1844, there were six English translations of Sue's novels, including one published by Carlyle's own publisher, Chapman & Hall. Moreover, Sue had been reviewed by Thackeray in 1843, and G. H. Lewes in 1844, also dining with Dickens in Paris in 1847 (Palmer Chevasco, *Mysterymania: The Reception of Eugène Sue in Britain, 1838-1860* [Bern: Peter Lang, 2003]). Thackeray, Lewes and Dickens were all close acquaintances of Carlyle. Indeed, Carlyle and his wife Jane were evidently familiar with Sue's work, Jane having referred to Sue in a letter written in 1847 ('such a monster as even Dumas and Sue...', JWC to TC, 28th Sep. 1847, CL 22:96). Carlyle himself showed considerable interest in contemporary French novels, going so far as to draft an article on George Sand in 1848, entitled 'Phallus-Worship' (now published ed. F. Kaplan, in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 2 [1980], 19-23). Later in the same *Pamphlet*, Carlyle made an explicit reference to Sue: 'Model Prisons', 89 ('with Balzac, Sue and Company...').

889 Eugène Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris* [1842-43] (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2009), 891.

890 'Model Prisons', 72. Sue and Carlyle's descriptions of the inmates were also more or less identical. See *Mystères*, 942 ('Sur ces traits rusés de celui-ci, on retrouvait la perfide subtilité du renard; chez celui-ci, la rapacité sanguinaire de l'oiseau de proie; chez cet autre, la férocité du tigre; ailleurs enfin, l'animale stupidité de la brute'), and 'Model Prisons', 70 ('ape-faces, imp-faces, angry dog-faces, heavy sullen ox-faces; degraded underfoot perverse creatures, sons of indocility, greedy mutinous darkness, and in one word, of STUPIDITY').

891 As a reviewer put it: 'Alas for the poor honest working man fallen upon these evil days... Give place to the murderer and thief; rogues and vagabonds, and model-prisons first; labourers, and artisans, and decent dwellings afterwards' ('Thomas Carlyle and John Howard', in *Fraser's Magazine*, 41 [Apr. 1850], 406-410 [406]).

on 'Model Prisons', 'the triumph is not the triumph of a melodramatic novelist, but of Socialism'.⁸⁹²

In addition to *laissez-faire* and pauperism, another target of the *Pamphlets* was political economy, or at least certain tendencies within the latter. As noted at the outset of this chapter, historians such as Donald Winch have implied that Carlyle took his critique of the latter from Southey and Coleridge, and that his rejection of the science was thus highly sentimental, if not, at times, downright ignorant.⁸⁹³ However, as we have seen, Carlyle was in fact fairly knowledgeable about political economy, having read Smith, Ricardo, McCulloch, and Sismondi. As Carlyle put it in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, addressing 'Respectable Professors of the Dismal Science', 'I have read much in those inimitable volumes of yours, - really I should think, some barrowfuls of them in my time'.⁸⁹⁴ Furthermore, having undertaken such readings, Carlyle did not reject political economy out of hand, considering it to contain many valuable insights. For instance, in *Cromwell* (1845), he had praised the latter for including 'Political Economists' in his 'Committee of Trade', and, in 1849, four months before the appearance of the first *Pamphlet*, he had advised Charles Gavan Duffy to consult 'political economists' regarding his proposals for agricultural reform.⁸⁹⁵ Similarly, in the *Pamphlets* themselves, Carlyle freely admitted that the 'Laws of the Shop-till' were 'indisputable', and often 'practically useful in certain departments of the Universe'. Thus, just as the *Pamphlets* ought not to be understood as an outright rejection of *laissez-faire*, nor should they be understood as an outright rejection of political economy.

However, in the passage of the *Pamphlets* cited above, Carlyle then moved on to what he considered to be the shortcomings of political economy, at least as it was commonly understood and practised in Britain. As Gregory Claeys has pointed out, during the early nineteenth century, political economists such as James Mill and Ricardo had 'increasingly adopted' a 'narrower definition of the science', 'thus further cutting the ties of political economy to eighteenth-century moral philosophy'. By the mid-1830s, political economy had thus become identified with an exclusive concern for the 'production of material wealth', a tendency which McCulloch termed "the restricted system of political economy".⁸⁹⁶ Indeed, it is significant that in the *Pamphlets*, McCulloch

892'Universal Suffrage', in *The Leader* (4th May 1850), 130-131 (130).

893Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 289-290, 400-402, 418-419.

894'The Present Time', 62.

895*Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches: With Elucidations* [1845], original three volumes reprinted in one (London: Ward Lock & Co. Ltd, n.d.), 612; TC to C. G. Duffy, 29th Sep. 1849, *CL* 24: 256.

896Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium*, 132-135. Furthermore, as Boyd Hilton has made clear, the rival 'evangelical' strand of political economy, which attached greater importance to moral considerations, had by the 1840s gone into terminal decline (*The Age of Atonement*, ch. 6, esp. p. 212-214, 248).

was the one political economist to appear in person, under the sobriquet 'M'Croudy'.⁸⁹⁷ This is the context in which Carlyle's critique of political economy in the *Pamphlets* needs to be understood. As the following passage makes clear, what Carlyle objected to was not political economy as such, but rather the 'restricted' form it had increasingly come to assume in Britain. Here, Carlyle reiterated his earlier point that the production of wealth ought not to be dealt with in abstraction from wider moral and political concerns, nor to be posited as the sole basis of a political community. Moreover, he also argued that political economists ought not to be allowed to dictate national policy as a whole. He wrote, regarding the doctrines of political economists:

Once I even tried to sail through the Immensities with them, and to front the big coming Eternities with them; but I found it would not do. As the Supreme Rule of Statesmanship, or Government of Men, - since this Universe is not wholly a Shop, - no.

Thus, Carlyle concluded, when it came to concerns 'beyond and above the shop-till', the time had come for 'Professors of the Dismal Science' to 'hold' their 'peace'.⁸⁹⁸ As will be seen below, this argument had deep resonance with classically-educated readers, particularly regarding the need to subordinate the production of material wealth to the wider good of the community.

In the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle's critique of democracy paralleled his critique of *laissez-faire*. While the *Pamphlets* have at times been seen as an wholesale repudiation of democracy, this was far from the case.⁸⁹⁹ In line with the Saint-Simonian understanding of democracy as a necessary, inevitable aspect of a 'critical' era, Carlyle declared:

universal *Democracy*, whatever we may think of it, has declared itself as an inevitable fact of the days in which we live; and he who has any chance to instruct, or lead, in his days, must begin by admitting that... Democracy, it may be said everywhere, is here: for sixty years now, ever since the grand of *First* French Revolution, that fact has been terribly announced to all the world... Democracy is the grand, alarming, imminent and indisputable Reality.⁹⁰⁰

Indeed, one Chartist reviewer, Thomas Cooper, underlined Carlyle's belief in the inevitability of

⁸⁹⁷'Jesuitism', 273.

⁸⁹⁸'The Present Time', 62.

⁸⁹⁹E.g. Le Quesne, *Carlyle*, 79-80: 'a violent repudiation of liberalism and democracy alike'.

⁹⁰⁰'The Present Time', 35.

democracy, reprinting this passage in full.⁹⁰¹ Moreover, Carlyle praised the continental revolutionaries for having swept away 'rulers' who were 'not ruling at all', but only 'surreptitiously drawing the wages, while the work remained undone'. In this sense, the revolutions of 1848 represented a 'universal bankruptcy of *Imposture*'.⁹⁰² Indeed, shortly after the outbreak of revolution in France, Carlyle had written in the *Examiner* that 'it is a stern, almost sacred joy, that the late news from Paris excite in earnest men'.⁹⁰³ Thus, the *Pamphlets* did not represent an outright rejection of democracy, reserving a valid 'critical' function to the latter.

However, as had been the case with *laissez-faire* and political economy, Carlyle was swift to focus in upon the shortcomings of democracy. Here, as in *Past and Present*, he relied substantially upon Plato, and the ancient Greek understanding of 'freedom' more generally.⁹⁰⁴ As already noted, the ancient Greeks had understood 'freedom' to mean self-mastery, that is, freedom from the law of one's own passions, and the ability to live according to the laws of nature. In contrast, 'slavery' meant slavery to one's own lower urges, which brought one into conflict with the laws of nature. For the Greeks, as for Carlyle, this applied to individuals and nations alike. With regard to individuals, Carlyle explained that the 'free man is he who is *loyal* to the Laws of this Universe', 'he that will go gladly to his labour and his suffering'.⁹⁰⁵ Or, as Carlyle put it elsewhere in the *Pamphlets*, the 'free men, if you could have understood it, they are the wise men; the patient, self-denying valiant; the Nobles of the World; who can discern the Law of this Universe, what it is, and piously *obey* it'.⁹⁰⁶ In contrast, 'foolish, *slavish*, wicked, insincere persons', led astray by their own selfish passions, were incapable of recognising and obeying those laws.⁹⁰⁷ Elsewhere, Carlyle, addressing such 'slavish' individuals, declared:

Left to walk your own road, the will-o'-wisps beguiled you, your short sight could not descry the pitfalls... and here at last you lie; fallen flat into the ditch, drowning there and dying, unless the others that are still standing please to pick you up... *you are of the nature of slaves*.⁹⁰⁸

901'Thinkings, From Thomas Carlyle', in *Cooper's Journal: Or, Unfettered Thinker and Plain Speaker for Truth, Freedom, and Progress*, Vol. I, no. 7 (16th Feb. 1850), 108.

902'The Present Time', 37.

903'Louis Philippe' [4th Mar. 1848], reprinted in *Rescued Essays of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Newberry (London: The Leadenhall Press, 1892), 3, 7.

904Cf. Chris R. Vanden Bossche, who claims to detect 'changes in the nature of [Carlyle's] analyses of freedom'. *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 133, 136.

905'Parliaments', 216-218.

906'The Present Time', 59.

907'The Present Time', 41. My italics.

908'The Present Time', 58-60, My italics.

Moreover, like Plato, Carlyle extended this analysis from individuals to nations. Like an individual, a nation was 'free' insofar as its better part was in control of its worse part, and a 'slave' insofar as the contrary was the case. Thus, as Carlyle explained: 'States are to be called happy and noble in so far as they settle rightly who is slave and who free; unhappy, ignoble, and doomed to destruction, as they settle it wrong'.⁹⁰⁹ For Carlyle, democracy would mean the enslavement of the state, in the sense that it would give the 'slavish' majority control over the minority of 'free' men. As he explained, 'no real *slave's* vote is other than a nuisance', and 'the fact is, slaves are in a tremendous majority everywhere'.⁹¹⁰ Thus, instead of extending the suffrage, it would be preferable to curtail it. Carlyle wrote: 'could you entirely exclude the slave's vote, and admit only the heroic free man's vote, - folly, knavery, falsity, gluttonous imbecility, lowmindedness and cowardice had, if not disappeared from the earth, reduced themselves to a rigorous minimum in human affairs'.⁹¹¹ However, it is important to emphasise that this was not an argument about social class, but rather about the moral character of individuals. Carlyle certainly did not consider the working-classes to be slavish, and his objections to democracy did not spring from fear of the 'masses'. For instance, in 'Ireland and the British Chief Governor' (1848), Carlyle had stated that: 'no fool's vote, no knave's, no liar's, no gluttonous greedy-minded cowardly person's (*rich or poor*), in a word, no *slave's* vote, is other than a nuisance'.⁹¹² In the *Pamphlets*, he made the same point, though now going so far as to argue that the rich were *more* likely to be slavish than the poor. He wrote:

there are fools, cowards, knaves, and gluttonous traitors true only to their own appetite, in immense majority in every rank of life; and there is nothing frightfuller than to see these voting and deciding!... Who, in such sad moments, but has to *hate* the profane vulgar, and feel that he must and will debar it from him! And, alas, the vulgarest vulgar, I often find, are not those in ragged coats at this day; but those in fine, superfine, and superfinest.⁹¹³

In addition to the ancient Greek understanding of 'freedom' and 'slavery', as pertaining to both individuals and nations, Carlyle also employing Plato's analogy of the 'ship of state', as he had done in *Past and Present*. For Carlyle, unanimity of voting would not enable a state to accomplish its goal of living in accordance with the laws of nature. He declaimed:

⁹⁰⁹'Parliaments', 216-218.

⁹¹⁰'Parliaments', 216-218.

⁹¹¹'Parliaments', 216-218.

⁹¹²'Ireland and the British Chief Governor', [13th May 1848], reprinted in *Rescued Essays*, 81-82. My italics.

⁹¹³'Parliaments', 212.

Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may accept this and that, above decks and below, in the most harmonious exquisitely constitutional manner: the ship, to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for, and fixed with adamantine rigour by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote... Unanimity on board ship; - yes indeed, the ship's crew may be very unanimous, which doubtless, for the time being, will be very comfortable to the ship's crew... but if the tack they unanimously steer upon is guiding them into the belly of the Abyss, it will not profit them much! - Ships accordingly do not use the ballot-box.⁹¹⁴

In slightly less purple prose, Carlyle also warned that, while 'in parliaments and other loud assemblies, your eloquent talk, *disunited* from Nature and her facts, is taken as wisdom and the correct image of said facts', 'Nature well knows what it is, Nature will not have it as such, and will reject your forged note one day, with huge costs'.⁹¹⁵ One commentator perceived Carlyle's debts to Plato clearly enough, writing in the *North British Review*: 'Two thousand years ago Socrates [as presented in the *Republic*] made it one of his aims to perform very much the same service for the men of Athens, teaching them, almost in the very words that Mr. Carlyle uses, that right and justice were the ends of all government, and that these ends could no more be accomplished by the haphazard association of the citizens, than the business of steering a ship safely could be accomplished by the empiric agreement of the passengers'.⁹¹⁶ Moreover, it can be no coincidence that in 1852, J. Llewelyn Davies chose to send Carlyle a copy of his recent translation of the *Republic*.⁹¹⁷ Having read it, Carlyle wrote to Emerson: 'I was much struck with Plato, last year, and his notions about Democracy: mere Latter-Day Pamphlet *saxa et faeces* (read *faeces*, if you like)'.⁹¹⁸ Moreover, in 1856, Carlyle told William Knighton that he considered Plato's *Republic* 'the best of his works by far'.⁹¹⁹ The Platonic inspiration of Carlyle's critique of democracy in the *Pamphlets*, as in *Past and Present*, can thus be stated with some certainty.

In the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle's polemic against the shortcomings of democracy also shaded into an attack on the Whig idea of representative government. According to this theory, periodic constitutional adjustment, particularly extension of the franchise, would allow the 'English

914'The Present Time', 40.

915'Stump-Orator', 163-164. See also p. 182.

916David Masson, review of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, in *North British Review*, XIV (Nov. 1850), 34.

917See TC to J. Llewelyn Davies, 27th Apr. 1852, *CL* 27:96-97. In his reply, Carlyle thanked Llewelyn Davis, while remarking somewhat disingenuously: 'The Divine Plato is always welcome to me, tho' hitherto rather useless, try him on what side I may'.

918TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 13th May 1853, *CL* 28:136-137.

919William Knighton, 'Conversations with Carlyle', in *Contemporary Review*, XXXIX [1881], 906.

Constitution' to keep pace with the progress of commerce, thus avoiding the kind of revolutionary explosions that had convulsed France.⁹²⁰ In 1848, the Whig historian Thomas Babington Macaulay published the initial volumes of his *History of England*, in which he celebrated the flexibility and adaptability of the constitution. In this sense, as A. Dwight Culler puts it, Macaulay's work was a 'hymn of thanks giving a celebration of triumphal change'.⁹²¹ Early in 1848, Carlyle had raised his concerns regarding the plight of the working-classes in the presence of Macaulay. writing in his journal:

Friday last at Lord Mahon's to breakfast; Macaulay... supply-and-demand, power ruinous to powerful himself, impossibility of govt. doing more than keep the peace, suicidal distraction of new French Republic &c, &c. Essentially irremediable commonplace nature of the man.⁹²²

Nonetheless, when the first volumes of Macaulay's *History* appeared, reviews were laudatory, and sales high.⁹²³ Indeed, as William Thomas has recently noted, Macaulay's *History* drew praise from Whigs and Tories alike, contributing to the formation of a cross-party, middle-class consensus in favour of commerce, industry, and piecemeal constitutional reform.⁹²⁴ Having read the work early in 1849,⁹²⁵ Carlyle expressed his disapprobation to Joseph Neuberg and Samuel Rogers, in the course of a conversation that took place early in January 1850. In response, Rogers suggested that Carlyle ought to 'set Macaulay right'.⁹²⁶ The following month, the first of Carlyle's *Pamphlets* came off the press.

While Carlyle did not mention Macaulay by name, his presence in the *Pamphlets* can be inferred from the context outlined above. In the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle ridiculed the 'English Constitution', arguing that, contrary to the claims of Macaulay, the latter had been rendered obsolete by the growth of industry. Moreover, according to Carlyle, it was altogether ill-equipped to remedy the

920See J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Political Economy of Burke's Analysis of the French Revolution', in his *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 10, John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 21-35, 55-57, and Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals*, 29, 37-41.

921A. Dwight Culler, *The Victorian Mirror of History* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 37-38.

922Journal entry dated 14th Mar. 1848, cited CL 22:265.

923William Thomas, *The Quarrel of Macaulay and Croker: Politics and History in the Age of Reform* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 284-285, 308-310, 313-314.

924Ibid.

925TC to Lady Ashburton, 29th Jan. 1849, CL 23:209.

926Joseph Neuberg to his sister, 12th Jan. 1850, in 'Carlyle and Neuberg', ed. Sadler, in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 50 (1884), 283.

sufferings of the working-classes, particularly the 'Giant Despair' of pauperism. He continued:

Our poor grandfathers, so busy conquering Indias, founding Colonies, inventing spinning-jennies, kindling Lancashires and Bromwichams, took no thought about the government of all that; left it all to be governed by Lord Fanny and the Hanover Succession, or how the gods pleased. And now we the poor grandchildren find that it will not stick together on these terms any longer... they were not made for us or for our objects at all.⁹²⁷

Elsewhere in the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle challenged the kind of triumphalist narrative of 'British Liberty' that had been embodied in Macaulay's *History*. In doing so, he again placed great emphasis on what he had earlier dubbed the 'Condition-of-England question', asking:

When shall we have done with all this of British Liberty, Voluntary Principle, Dangers of Centralization, and the like? It is really getting too bad. For British Liberty, it seems, the people cannot be taught to read. British Liberty, shuddering to interfere with the rights of capital, takes six or eight millions of money annually to feed the idle labourer whom it dare not employ. For British Liberty we live over poisonous cesspools, gully-drains, and detestable abominations; and omnipotent London cannot sweep the dirt out of itself. British Liberty produces — what? Floods of Hansard Debates every year, and apparently little else at present. If these are the results of British Liberty, I, for one, move we should lay it on the shelf a little, and look out for something other and farther.⁹²⁸

Carlyle also warned his readers that, whatever Macaulay might have led them to believe, there was no 'Constitution or body of Constitutions, were they clothed with never such venerabilities and general acceptabilities, that avails to deliver a Nation from the consequences of forgetting [the laws of] Nature'.⁹²⁹ This was, of course, the same point as Carlyle had made in 'Chartism' and *Past and Present*, namely, regarding the inability of political constitutions to remedy the plight of the working-classes.

In sum, the arguments of the *Pamphlets* regarding *laissez-faire* and democracy were broadly continuous with those of the Saint-Simonians, and those that Carlyle had been expressing since his encounter with them in 1830. As before, he continued to present the two phenomena as necessary,

927'Downing Street' [Apr. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 105-106.

928'The Present Time', 50-51.

929'Downing Street', 122-123.

indispensable aspects of a 'critical' era, dissolving the institutions of the past, and preparing the inauguration of those of the future. However, like the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle continued to draw attention to the shortcomings of *laissez-faire* and democracy, particularly their inability to improve the condition of the working-class. Indeed, Carlyle's continuing debts to the Saint-Simonian idea of a 'critical' era were remarked upon in an article published in the *Reasoner*, a 'secularist' newspaper edited by the former Owenite G. J. Holyoake, in 1852. Here, the author reviewed a recent book by a certain Monsieur Bregnat, entitled 'The Socialists since February', placing particular emphasis on the passages regarding Pierre Leroux, a former Saint-Simonian. According to the author, Leroux's recent writings could be summarised as such: 'Society is in ruins! We have arrived at one of those epochs of renovation when, after the destruction of a social order, another social order commences'. 'Many of Bregnat's statements regarding Leroux', the author added, 'are applicable to Carlyle'.⁹³⁰

THE RECEPTION OF THE *PAMPHLETS*

In the existing secondary literature, it is often assumed that the tone and content of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) 'alienated' many of Carlyle's readers. For instance, according to A. L. Le Quesne, 'with the *French Revolution*', Carlyle 'won the ear of a generation, and with the *Pamphlets* he lost it'. Moreover, Le Quesne claims, the *Pamphlets* 'marked the point of final alienation between Carlyle and every shade of liberal and radical opinion'.⁹³¹ Similarly, David DeLaura writes that following the appearance of the *Pamphlets*, 'most of Carlyle's social and political prescriptions were almost overnight and forever rejected by all sane Englishmen'.⁹³² This, of course, depends upon what one means by 'sane'. In this section, I would like to suggest that the backlash against Carlyle had less to do with the *Pamphlets* themselves, than with the changed context in which they appeared. Moreover, while the *Pamphlets* might indeed have 'alienated' many liberal, middle-class readers, they did not 'alienate' Chartists or Owenites (perhaps not 'sane Englishmen'), a fact which has been altogether overlooked in the existing secondary literature.

As contemporaries recognised, the backlash against Carlyle had already begun significantly before the appearance of the *Pamphlets*, primarily due to the revolution of 1848 in France, and the resurgence of the Chartist movement at home. In April 1848, the Chartists had again petitioned Parliament to extend the franchise to working men, organising a mass demonstration at Kennington

⁹³⁰Kenneth Morency 'M. Pierre Leroux', in *The People*, reprinted in *The Reasoner and Theological Examiner*, vol. XII, no. 301 (1852), 252-253.

⁹³¹Le Quesne, *Carlyle*, 55, 79-80. See also 91.

⁹³²DeLaura, 'Carlyle and Arnold: The Religious Issue', in *Carlyle Past and Present*, ed. K. J. Fielding and Rodger L. Tarr (London: Vision Press, 1976), 127-154 (130). See also G. B. Tennyson, 'Carlyle Today', in *ibid.*, 33.

Common in support of their claims. Following the rejection of the petition, certain Chartists turned to 'physical force' methods, initiating a spate of riots and attempted insurrections around the country. While these proved similarly ineffective, they did provoke significant public alarm, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of the events of 1848 in France. In this context, the middle-classes perceptibly slackened in their enthusiasm for the "Condition-of-England question". For instance, in June 1848, the Christian Socialist newspaper *Politics for the People*, protesting against Parliament's refusal to regulate the working hours of London bakers, asked:

Have the events in France frightened our isle from its propriety? Because they have made the organization of labour a pretext for violence, are we to hand our population over, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of *laissez-faire*?

The paper then added that in 'spite of all that has happened', the 'forcible language of Carlyle' continued 'as true as when it was first penned': "With our present system of individual mammonism and government of *laissez-faire*, this nation cannot LIVE"⁹³³. A similar point was made in an article that appeared in the *Northern Star* in December 1848. Given the acuity of its analysis, it deserves to be cited at some length:

Thomas Carlyle coined a phrase two or three years ago [sic], which so captured the imaginations of the scribes and spouters of the day, that it obtained universal circulation. It almost seemed as if "The Condition of England Question" would put all minor questions out of sight, and assume its rightful predominant position, as the sole important question which required a settlement at the hands of Legislators, and Cabinets... The fashion has now changed. Of all the subjects that by possibility may be talked about – can be talked about – or ought to be talked about – ["The Condition of England Question"] is to be specially and religiously avoided. The highest wisdom of politicians and statesmen is now discovered to consist in doing nothing... The causes of this reaction are not difficult to find. The revolution of February in France was the commencement of a real attempt to grapple with the evils which had grown into such magnitude, as to be no longer endurable by the mass of the people. ... To such plans, of course, political adventurers, jobbers, stock-jobbers, profit-mongers, place-hunters, and all the various classes who prefer to live in luxury upon the labour of others, have insuperable objections... Hence, after the first shock of surprise was over, the leaders of the pampered idle classes... set to work and organised a Press conspiracy

⁹³³'The Case of the Journeymen Bakers', in *Politics for the People*, 14 (22nd July 1848), 231-232.

against Labour and its rights all over Europe.⁹³⁴

Following the appearance of the *Pamphlets* in 1850, Carlyle's defenders were quick to point out that their contents were much the same as that of his previous writings. As the *Leader* put it, 'Carlyle has said nothing in those pamphlets which he has not said in his writings and conversations for many years'.⁹³⁵ Similarly, in an anonymous publication, James Hannay, a self-styled 'Carlylian', insisted that 'Carlyle *has not* changed his principles, but only developed them'. According to Hannay, there was little in the *Pamphlets* that had not already appeared in works such as *Sartor Resartus* and *Past and Present*, the *Pamphlets* themselves being 'so many leaves from one tree, the sap and life of which exists equally in leaves and trunk'.⁹³⁶ The same point was made by a contributor to the *Dublin Review*, who also provided a remarkably succinct sketch of Carlyle's (Saint-Simonian) idea of a 'critical' era:

feudal forms remaining when all feudal ideals had lost their force, aristocracies became faithless to their duties, became corrupt and selfish, became, in short, another *sham*... Such was the origin of modern democracy, which in itself, with all its passionate cries of liberty and equality, [Carlyle] regards as nothing more than disguised anarchy, of which the best that can be said is this, that it is a transition to true government in some other form... Such is a sketch of Carlyle's philosophy, enounced by him in its substantial peculiarities for twenty years at least.⁹³⁷

Nonetheless, the response to the *Pamphlets* in the mainstream press was extremely hostile. In March 1850, the *Leader* declared that '*the* talk of the day is centred in Carlyle's uncompromising pamphlets, which the majority deplore, while many shrug their shoulders in uncomprehending amazement'.⁹³⁸ While the content of Carlyle's writings might not have changed, the context in which they appeared had. Following the initial shock of 1848, the economy had begun to improve, Chartism was on the wane, and Britain had successfully escaped the contagion of continental revolution. This all contributed to a renewed sense of optimism, which Macaulay's *History of England*, with its celebration of modern commerce and the adaptability of the 'English Constitution', served to articulate. In this context, Carlyle's apocalyptic pronouncements regarding the 'Condition-of-England question' appeared increasingly unlikely, and were also, it seems, increasingly

934'Employment for the People', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (23rd Dec. 1848), 4.

935'Literature', in *The Leader* (30th Mar. 1850), 13-14 (13).

936*Blackwood v. Carlyle: A Vindication. By a Carlylian* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1850), 12-18.

937'Carlyle's Works', in *The Dublin Review*, 29 (Sep. 1850), 169-206 (175-179).

938'Literature', in *The Leader* (30th Mar. 1850), 13-14 (13).

unwelcome. Macaulay, having read 'Carlyle's Trash', summarily pronounced the author to be 'an empty-headed bombastic dunce'.⁹³⁹ For the *Times*, Carlyle lacked faith in the present:

The world, according to Mr. Carlyle, has never been so bad as it is... We [however] are conscious enough of imperfection, but being satisfied also of the existence on every side of actual good – of the presence of productive activity – of the evidences of marvellous progress – of the increase of genuine goodwill.⁹⁴⁰

Other reviewers took particular umbrage at Carlyle's belittling of the 'Constitution'. For instance, one Tory reviewer, attacking Carlyle in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, exclaimed; 'So then, the Monarchy is a sham, and so are the laws, the Church, and the Constitution!', adding: 'the author is opposed to the form of government which is unalterably established in these kingdoms'.⁹⁴¹ Indeed, this was an accurate assessment of the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle having, as one French reviewer put it, 'ridden roughshod' over 'everything in which an Englishman takes pride, his parliament, his liberty, his material progress'.⁹⁴² Understandably, this served to alienate those readers to whom Carlyle referred as 'my miserable little "Advanced-Liberal" and other enlightened quondam "disciples"'.⁹⁴³ As a contributor to the *Eclectic Review* put it: 'Whether [Carlyle] be or be not aware of the fact, his giant shadow is passing swiftly from off the face of the public mind'.⁹⁴⁴ However, in fact, it might be more correct to say that Carlyle's 'giant shadow' was in fact shifting from one 'face' of the 'public mind' to another.⁹⁴⁵

Given Carlyle's persistent and vehement demands for the improvement of the condition of the working class, it is perhaps unsurprising that the *Pamphlets* met with a relatively positive response in the Chartist press. While the Chartist agitations of 1848 had proved ineffective, they had afforded the authorities a pretext for repression, and many Chartist leaders, such as Ernest Jones, were soon arrested and sentenced to prison. As Gregory Claeys has noted, these events 'were widely regarded

939Journal entry dated 4th Apr. 1850, in *The Journals of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, ed. Thomas (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), II:230. For other derogatory references, see II:225, III:132-133, III:173, III:190-191, V:240, V:264. See also TC to John A. Carlyle, 20th Dec. 1851, *CL* 26:274.

940Review of 'Life of Sterling', in *The Times* (1st Nov. 1851), 7.

941William Edmonstoune Aytoun, 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 646.

942Émile Montégut, 'Thomas Carlyle et John Sterling', in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 (1852), 134-165 (148-149)

943TC to John A. Carlyle, 18th Oct. 1851, *CL* 26:211. See also 'Jane Welsh Carlyle', in *Reminiscences*, 85.

944'Carlyle's Life of Sterling', in *The Eclectic Review*, 2 (1851), 717-729 (718).

945C.f. Fred Kaplan, 'Over the next decade, whatever glimmer of hope he had that his writings could make him a public force for political reform slowly dimmed. It was extinguished with the hostile reception of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*' (*Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* [Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1983], 273-274).

as having nullified existing Chartist strategy and discredited its leadership'.⁹⁴⁶ A new generation of Chartist leaders, such as George Jacob Holyoake, W. J. Linton, and George Julian Harney, thus found themselves obliged, to use Margot Finn's words, to 'reassess the essentially political notions of national sovereignty embodied in the six points'.⁹⁴⁷ Particularly, the failure to obtain political reforms prompted the Chartists to fix their attention more closely upon economic and social issues. Thus, as Ernest Jones' biographer, Miles Taylor, has recently put it, 'in defeat many of the Chartist leaders had turned to a more socialist sounding agenda'.⁹⁴⁸ This tended to widen yet further the divide between the Chartists and more affluent, middle-class reformers.⁹⁴⁹ Moreover, it also served to strengthen the Chartists' commitment to the "Condition-of-England question", and to intensify their support for Carlyle. This is well-illustrated by the *Northern Star's* account of a 'Great Chartist Meeting' that took place in the City of London on 14th January 1850, Here, Samuel Kidd, ('one of the most socialistic of the later, minor Chartist leaders', according to Claey's),⁹⁵⁰ mounted the platform, being 'warmly applauded' by the audience. According to the *Star's* reporter:

[Kidd] agreed in the statement of the resolution, that the tendency of this country was downwards. However, Mr. Macaulay [sic] might doubt the truth of the assertion; he agreed with Carlyle, that the two-handed workman had never been in a worse position.⁹⁵¹

In contrast to the middle-class press, the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, which began to appear in February 1850, did little to diminish Carlyle's standing in the pages of the *Northern Star*. In March 1850, the *Star's* 'Parliamentary Review' buttressed its denunciation of the 'present Ministry', which seemed to believe 'the highest art of statesmanship to consist in doing as little as possible at the greatest possible cost', with a reference to Carlyle.⁹⁵² Seven months later, the *Northern Star* challenged the emerging consensus that because economic growth had returned, England had now reached 'the apex of civilisation through Free Trade'. Like Carlyle, the author then attacked the notion that the production of material wealth was an end in itself, as well as the tendency of mainstream political economy to deal with the latter in abstraction from all other social facts. He wrote:

Not so fast. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in *your*

946 Claey's, *Citizens and Saints*, 268.

947 Finn, *After Chartism*, 82-86.

948 Miles Taylor, *Ernest Jones, Chartism, and the Romance of Politics, 1819-1869* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 144-145.

949 Finn, *After Chartism*, 61.

950 Claey's, *Citizens and Saints*, 310-311.

951 'Great Chartist Meeting in the City of London', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (19th Jan. 1850).

952 'Parliamentary Review', in *The Northern Star* (30th Mar. 1850), 4.

philosophy,” Messrs Political Economists. There are social and moral faculties, as well as physical and bargaining propensities, in man, and the Government that ignores the existence of these faculties is certain to have the fact forced upon their notice in a very unwelcome and disagreeable way. The production and the distribution of wealth is not the whole of the science of Society. It is but a part – an important, but still subordinate part of that science, and those who, in their ignorance, treat it as if it comprised the whole, are certain to be rudely undeceived. “Supply-and-demand,” says THOMAS CARLYLE, in his own quaint and forcible style, “is not the one Law of Nature; Cash payment is not the sole means of man with man.”⁹⁵³

The following year, in March 1851, the *Star* reiterated its opposition to *laissez-faire*, adding that the so-called “masses” were ‘utter infidels to what Thomas Carlyle calls “the shabbiest gospel ever preached”’.⁹⁵⁴ Moreover, the same month, the paper reported a lecture that Samuel Kidd had recently delivered in London on the ‘Rights of Labour’. Here, Kidd rehearsed some of the arguments regarding competition, mechanisation, over-production and under-consumption that have already been explored above:

The lecturer commenced by stating that the question of Free-trade was not as his opponents asserted, a settled question... A great amount of production was no test of prosperity, unless the people could purchase those productions: when hats, shoes, &c., were most abundant, those who produced them were in the greatest distress. He then gave extracts from John Stuart Mills [sic], and a mind of a very opposite order, Thomas Carlyle, proving that machinery, as carried out in the doctrines of the Free-trade school, had never yet produced any results beneficial to the working man.⁹⁵⁵

In 1852, the *Star* repeated its emphasis on the moral corruption engendered by *laissez-faire*, arguing that the ‘Competitive System’ had destroyed the ‘soul of honour and honesty’, being ‘what THOMAS CARLYLE would call a ‘huge unveracity’.⁹⁵⁶ Finally, later the same year, the paper reassured its readers that ‘men of genius and of literary note’, ‘Mazzini, Kossuth, Louis Blanc, Carlyle’, ‘are ranged on our side’.⁹⁵⁷ In sum, a reading of the *Northern Star* suggests that while the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* might have diminished Carlyle’s standing in the middle-class press, they at the same time

953‘The Crime, Plague, and Quack Doctors’, in *The Northern Star and National Trades’ Journal* (26th Oct. 1850).

954‘Who Leads the Millions’, in *The Northern Star and National Trades’ Journal* (22nd Mar. 1851), 4.

955‘Rights of Labour’, in *The Northern Star and National Trades’ Journal* (17th May 1851), 7.

956‘The Cheap and Nasty System’, in *The Northern Star* (17th Jan. 1852), 4.

957Review of January Searle, ‘Essays, Poems, Allegories, and Fables’, in *The Star of Freedom* (1st May 1852), 3.

served to confirm and strengthen it among the Chartists. For the latter, Carlyle's writings continued to provide an important resource in developing a more sophisticated social and economic critique, and in articulating an independent working-class identity.

In addition to the favourable reception Carlyle continued to receive among the Chartists, he also found a sympathetic audience amongst Owenites, including the prominent Leeds socialist, James Hole.⁹⁵⁸ In his *Lectures on Social Science* (1851), Hole began by rehearsing Carlyle's portrayal of the Middle Ages, insisting that even 'the Feudal system, arbitrary as it seems to us, contained strong social-elements'. In particular, while the institution of vassalage 'did not permit the Vassal freedom', it did at least give 'a greater guarantee against absolute want than is at present possessed by the "Independent labourer"'.⁹⁵⁹ Hole then followed Carlyle's delineation of the decline of the feudal system, and the onset of a 'critical' era, placing particular emphasis on the negative, destructive, yet indispensable role of political economy and *laissez-faire*:

At the period when modern political economy arose in this country... the remains of feudal institutions were not all banished... Logically, [the message of political economy] amounts to this: - "Selfish and short sighted control is unjust: *therefore* all control, even of wisdom and benevolence, is inexpedient! Many tyrants are better than few; *therefore* the best protection against the selfishness of one, or of a few, is to give *every body's selfishness* a fair and equal chance. The opposing forces will nullify each other, and create a social calm." The advocates of the system have mistaken *destruction* for *construction*.

However, according to Hole, while having fulfilled a necessary function in the past, these doctrines had now run their course, being unable to provide a solution to the sufferings of the working class. Whenever the latter cried out for help, the 'legislators meet them with the reply':

"A new science has burst upon the world, - a science called Political Economy, - by which we have discovered that it is not our business to meddle with the relations of Capital and Labour. Every body should take care of his own interest. The true province of government is *to do nothing*."⁹⁶⁰

958A short summary of Hole's lectures may be found in Noel Thompson, *The Market and Its Critics: Socialist Political Economy in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 127-134. Thompson notes that 'for the most part Hole's critique of the market followed traditional Owenite lines' (128), while ignoring Hole's debts to Carlyle.

959James Hole, *Lectures on Social Science and the Organization of Labor* (London: John Chapman, 1851), v-viii.

960Hole, *Lectures*, 5-7.

In elucidating the shortcomings of *laissez-faire*, Hole cited Sismondi, arguing that while competition and mechanisation might serve to make 'commodities cheap', they also drove down profits and wages, thus destroying '*purchasing power*', and, in turn, causing crises of over-production.⁹⁶¹ Furthermore, like Carlyle, Hole reserved particular ire for the state of dependence to which *laissez-faire* reduced the working classes. According to Hole, the latter found that 'in parting with the thralldom of Feudalism, they have taken on that of Capital: that slavery has ceased in name but survived in fact'.⁹⁶² Significantly, Hole, like Carlyle, emphasised dependence on abstract market forces, rather than dependence on individual employers, explaining that though the 'Labourer' was 'no longer the slave of the *Capitalist*, he is indubitably the slave of *Capital*'.⁹⁶³ For Hole, the most loathsome instance of such slavery was pauperism, an evil that was further exacerbated by the practice of forcing the unemployed to engage in useless and degrading task-work, such as the breaking of stones, and the picking of oakum. Again, like Carlyle, Hole objected not so much to material poverty, as to the moral corruption that such dependence engendered. It was, he argued, 'a disgrace to the good sense of the English nation, that such a vast number of unemployed labourers, capable of at least maintaining themselves, capable of adding to the wealth of the country, and becoming worthy and reputable members of society, should be do nothing, worse than nothing, work which is not work, but a make-believe and a sham, work by which they get demoralized in character, and drag down the independent labourer on whose wages they subsist to a position little better than their own'. Hole then cited Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, to the effect that a society able to guarantee employment to the "full-formed Horse" ought to be able to do the same for the "full-formed Man".⁹⁶⁴ Later, in a final protest against the shortcomings of *laissez-faire*, Hole cited at length from Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*:

Well may Carlyle ask: "When shall we have done with all this of British Liberty, Voluntary Principle, Dangers of Centralization, and the like? It is really getting too bad. For British Liberty, it seems, the people cannot be taught to read. British Liberty, shuddering to interfere with the rights of capital, takes six or eight millions of money annually to feed the idle labourer whom it dare not employ. For British Liberty we live over poisonous cesspools, gully-drains, and detestable abominations... If these are the results of British Liberty, I, for one, move we should lay it on the shelf a little, and look out for something other and

⁹⁶¹Hole, *Lectures*, 16-17.

⁹⁶²Hole, *Lectures*, 5-7.

⁹⁶³Hole, *Lectures*, 33-34.

⁹⁶⁴Hole, *Lectures*, 62, 64, 66.

farther.”⁹⁶⁵

Despite his fall from grace in the middle-class press, Carlyle thus continued to meet with a positive reception amongst Owenites and Chartists. However, there is one other noteworthy instance of the way in which Carlyle's writings continued to provide an important resource for the articulation of working-class protest. On the 22nd October 1853, the *Leader* had published a letter from a correspondent signing himself 'Tim'. In his letter, 'Tim' referred to the 'shawl and plaid printing' industry of Scotland, informing his readers that 'Messrs Cumming, Melville and Co.' had recently patented a 'a machine of cylindrical character, which will produce four times the quantity of work at present produced by three men, and for the sum of eight shillings will give what at present a workman would charge four pounds'. 'Tim' then complained that 'the great number of the blockprinters here' looked on the machine 'as a misfortune'. After having explained some of the benefits that machinery had afforded humanity, 'Tim' concluded that the blockprinter ought to 'pause' and think, 'before he blame'.⁹⁶⁶ This provoked an angry riposte from a Scottish blockprinter, signing himself 'Pistis', which appeared in the following edition of the *Leader*. Addressing the paper on behalf of his fellow print-workers, 'Pistis' explained that 'we have taken the freedom of asking for a small nook in your paper, therein to enter our protest against the extermination that your learned correspondent so naively encourages us, the block printers, to submit to'. 'Pistis' then cited a passage from 'Carlyle's Past and Present' regarding a 'Manchester Insurrection', asking the readers of the *Leader* to heed the words 'of one who has obtained some small respect among his fellow-men':

“And this was what these poor Manchester operatives, with all the darkness that was in them, and round them, did manage to perform. They put their huge inarticulate question, 'What do you mean to do with us?' ”

'Your correspondent', wrote 'Pistis',

has probably read this – surely may profit by reading it again. But allow us, in the meantime, to assure him that there are printers... who have paused and reflected on this subject... [who] continue to throw blame, heavy blame on all discoveries that diminish the amount of labour to be done, no provision being made by society for those who are thus supplanted.⁹⁶⁷

⁹⁶⁵Hole, *Lectures*, 127-131.

⁹⁶⁶'Tim', letter to the Editor of the *The Leader*, 19th Oct. 1853, in *The Leader* (22nd Oct. 1853) 1022.

⁹⁶⁷'Pistis', letter to the Editor of *The Leader*, n.p. 26th Oct. 1853, in *The Leader* (5th Nov. 1853), 1071.

Thus, it seems, the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* had done little to diminish Carlyle's status among the blockprinters of Scotland.

CLASSICAL REFERENCES: HELEN MACFARLANE, JAMES LORIMER, JOHN RUSKIN, AND J. S. MILL

As noted in the above discussion of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle's criticisms of the shortcomings of democracy had been considerably indebted to Plato. Carlyle's use of classical references proved irksome to some readers, including Helen MacFarlane, the translator of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*.⁹⁶⁸ According to MacFarlane, modern democracy was something qualitatively new, and the example of the ancient world was thus an irrelevance. In the first instalment of her review of Carlyle, MacFarlane wrote, in a passage Reinhart Koselleck might have particularly appreciated:

The world has never yet seen a democratic form of society, for the simple reason, that democracy is the Ultimate Fact of the present time, and not that of any other time... One cannot apply any past form of experience, as the measure of a new thought, without getting involved in endless absurdity.⁹⁶⁹

In a subsequent instalment of her review of Carlyle, MacFarlane elaborated on this point, explaining:

Among all the rich variety of forms assumed by the antique civilisation, there is not one which expresses this fundamental idea of Christianity or democracy, either in a mythical or speculative form... The absolute independence of the personality, its existence for and through itself, were quite unknown to Plato... that man, as such is free – as a human being, is born free - was unknown.⁹⁷⁰

⁹⁶⁸In 1850, the same year as her review of Carlyle, MacFarlane published the first English translation of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*.

⁹⁶⁹Helen MacFarlane, 'Remarks on the Times, apropos of certain passages in No. 1, of Thomas Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*', in *The Democratic Review of British and Foreign Politics, History & Literature*, ed. G. Julian Harney, vol. I (Apr. 1850), 422-425 (423). According to Koselleck, in modern theories of progress, 'the exemplarity of ancient histories fades away', and 'the divide between previous experience and coming expectation opened up'. See *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* [1979], trans. Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 243, 246.

⁹⁷⁰Helen MacFarlane, 'Remarks on the Times, apropos of certain passages in No. 1, of Thomas Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*', in *The Democratic Review of British and Foreign Politics, History & Literature*, ed. G. Julian Harney,

Ultimately, MacFarlane was a modern, claiming that man was 'free' as such, and that the desirability of 'Democracy' followed as a matter of course. In contrast, Carlyle held to the teachings of the ancients, believing that only a chosen few, who had attained self-mastery, and who lived in accordance with the laws of nature, were 'free', while other individuals were 'slaves' to self, and could thus not be expected to exercise good citizenship.

However, Carlyle's criticisms of democracy found a sympathetic response amongst certain classical scholars. In 1857, Carlyle informed his wife that a 'certain hidebound, rather learned, artificially serious "Mr Lorimer, Advocate" has sent me a little Book; setting forth in its own way the *Anti-democratic* doctrine contained in a certain man's Pamphlets &c'.⁹⁷¹ Carlyle was referring to James Lorimer, who had recently published a work entitled *Political Progress Not Necessarily Democratic: Or Relative Equality The True Foundation of Liberty* (1857). Here, Lorimer invoked the ancient idea of the constitutional "Cycle", which, he explained, 'probably originated with Plato', although 'Polybius was the first to reduce it to an intelligible form'. Lorimer then outlined Polybius' argument that there were six forms of constitution, each of which inevitably gave rise to another. In particular, 'Monarchy' gave rise to 'Royalty', which degenerated into 'Tyranny'. This was then overthrown and replaced by 'Aristocracy', which in turn descended into 'Oligarchy'. The victims of the latter would then rise up and establish a 'Democracy', which, if left to take its natural course, would soon degenerate into mere 'Ochlocracy', or mob rule. This 'last step', Lorimer explained, would ultimately prove fatal to the commonwealth, leading to 'utter political disorganization, analogous to the savage condition which preceded the commencement of political life'.⁹⁷² According to Lorimer, this final stage was 'the only epoch of political development through which we Englishmen have not already passed'.⁹⁷³ Lorimer continued:

If the nobler influences of society are impeded in their action, if the voices of the prudent and the virtuous are unheard, the loss to the community is the same, whether they be drowned in the shouts of an infuriated rabble, or silenced by the constitutional action of misdirected, though in the last instance perhaps, inevitable legislation.⁹⁷⁴

vol. II (June 1850), 11-20 (11-12). MacFarlane had of course taken this idea from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837), and thereafter followed a long citation from Hegel himself.

971TC to JWC ; 19 August 1857; CL 33:40.

972James Lorimer, *Political Progress Not Necessarily Democratic: Or Relative Equality The True Foundation of Liberty* (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1857), 122-123. Here, Lorimer cited the eighth book of Plato's *Republic* in support of his argument. For a similar point, see also p. 131.

973Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 57-58.

974Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 66-67.

According to Lorimer, the 'history of antiquity' was 'full of examples of states which, having reached a full and normal maturity, gradually sank down under a plethora of liberty', and contemporaries might 'derive instruction from this cardinal point of resemblance'.⁹⁷⁵ A few years later, arguments similar to those of Lorimer were expressed by John Ruskin in his *Unto This Last* (1860) and *Essays on Political Economy* (1862-63). As has been seen, in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle had phrased his criticisms of democracy in terms of a classical distinction between freedom, understood as self-mastery and dedication to the public good, and slavishness, understood as slavery to the law of one's own selfish passions. For Carlyle, only the 'free man' deserved a say in public affairs, whereas democracy risked extending the vote to free and 'slave' alike. According to Carlyle, this would be detrimental not only to the public good, but also to the 'slave' himself, who required not the vote, but rather guidance and governance from his superiors. In the *Essays*, Ruskin made the same point, arguing:

The fact is that slavery is not a political institution at all, but an inherent, natural, and eternal inheritance of a large portion of the human race - to whom the more you give of their own will, the more slaves they will make themselves.

He then added: 'all I would say [has] been said (already in vain) by Carlyle, in the first of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets"'.⁹⁷⁶ Elsewhere in the *Essays*, Ruskin cited the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* at length, before making a (very classical) distinction between a 'republic' and a 'democracy', two terms which had become 'confused, especially in modern use'. For Ruskin, a 'republic' was 'a polity in which the state, with its all, is at every man's service, and every man, with his all, at the state's service'. If a majority of men were willing to dedicate themselves to the service of the state, then a 'democracy' would be the correct form for a 'republic' to assume. However, if the majority were slaves (in the classical sense), caring only for themselves and nothing for the state, then their 'democracy' could not be said to constitute a 'republic'. For Ruskin, as for Carlyle in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, a vivid illustration of this distinction was provided by the United States. He wrote:

it is the fashion at present to talk of the "failure of republican institutions in America," when there has never yet been in America any such thing as an institution; neither any such thing as a res-publica, but only a multitudinous res-privata; every man for himself. It is not

⁹⁷⁵Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 72.

⁹⁷⁶'Essays on Political Economy' [1862-63], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays on Political Economy* (London: J. M. Dent / New York: E. P. Dutton, 1907), 285-286.

republicanism which fails now in America; it is your model science of political economy, brought to its perfect practice.⁹⁷⁷

As the latter phrase suggests, Ruskin also endorsed Carlyle's criticism of political economy, believing that untrammelled selfishness, whether in politics or economics, was fundamentally inimical to the spirit of a republic. In *Unto this Last*, Ruskin repeated Carlyle's point that political economy dealt with the production of wealth in isolation from all those other activities necessary to the existence of a stable and well-ordered polity. According to Ruskin, the 'soi-disant science' of 'political economy' fallaciously sought to give directions 'for the gaining of wealth, irrespectively of the consideration of its moral sources', and to dictate 'national practice' through reference to the 'law of purchase and gain'.⁹⁷⁸ Having read *Unto this Last*, Carlyle wrote to Ruskin:

The Dismal-Science people will object that their science expressly *abstracts* itself from moralities, from &c &c: but what you say, and show, is incontrovertibly true, That no "Science" worthy of men (and not worthier of dogs or of devils) has a right to call itself "Political Economy," or can exist at all except mainly as a fetid nuisance and public poison, on *other* terms than those you now shadow out.⁹⁷⁹

Furthermore, Carlyle clearly perceived the classical inspiration of Ruskin's critique of political economy, praising him for 'rising into the sphere of *Plato* (our almost best), whh in exchange for the sphere of *Macculloch, Mill and Co.* is a mighty improvement!'.⁹⁸⁰ Indeed, James Lorimer made much the same point as Carlyle and Ruskin regarding political economy. In the work cited above, Lorimer, like Carlyle, did not dismiss political economy out of hand, but rather objected to its tendency to deal with the production of material wealth in abstraction from more important social, political, and moral considerations. According to Lorimer, the ancients had had a healthier understanding of political economy, which they treated as a subordinate branch of a larger science of politics. He explained:

the science which treats of the acquisition and the distribution of wealth... has very important bearings on social and political progress, and consequently on politics as the science of that progress, [but it] is no more identical with it than a part is identical with the whole... What is

977'Essays on Political Economy', 278-280.

978'Unto This Last' [1860], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays*, 115, 141-142.

979TC to John Ruskin, 29th Oct. 1860, *CL* 37:29-30.

980TC to John Ruskin, 30th June 1862, *CL* 38:106-107.

now called political economy was by no means unknown to the ancients. It was treated, under the name of chrematistics, as a department of politics, to which, as the genus under which the whole of the social science were ranged, and in which in a certain sense even ethics was included, it was subordinated.⁹⁸¹

In *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), John Stuart Mill also accepted many of the criticisms that Carlyle had made of political economy, particularly its tendency to deal with the production of wealth in abstraction from moral and political considerations. For instance, Mill admitted that 'the study of the conditions of national wealth as a detached subject is unphilosophical, because, all the different aspects of social phenomena acting and reacting on one another, they cannot be rightly understood apart'. In this sense, some political economists had indeed 'prosecuted' their discipline 'in a contracted spirit'. However, at the same time, Mill argued that this was not an argument against political economy as such, and that there was still a role for 'useful generalisations' about 'the material and industrial phenomena of society'.⁹⁸² Indeed as Mill later acknowledged in his *Autobiography* (1873), he had obtained from the Saint-Simonians 'a clearer conception than ever before of the peculiarities of an era of transition in opinion, and ceased to mistake the moral and intellectual characteristics of such an era, for the normal attributes of humanity'. More specifically, Mill recalled that 'it was partly by their writings that my eyes were opened to the very limited and temporary value of the old political economy, which assumes private property and inheritance as indefeasible facts, and freedom of production and exchange as the *dernier mot* of social improvement'.⁹⁸³

'OLD MAN POLYPHEMUS': CARLYLE AND COMPLACENCY

As has been seen during the previous sections, Carlyle's criticisms of *laissez-faire* and democracy still continued to circulate amongst Chartists and Owenites, while also finding varying degrees of endorsement in the works of Lorimer, Ruskin, and Mill. However, they had by the late-1850s become almost entirely anathema to the mainstream periodical press. The reason for this was most likely the so-called 'Victorian Boom', which would continue until the onset of the 'Great Depression' in 1873. With the economy expanding and Chartism dormant, the middle-classes were restored to a new sense of optimism regarding the future. In this context, Carlyle's warnings about the dangers of *laissez-faire* and democracy increasingly became a matter of jest. For instance, in 1858, the *Times*

⁹⁸¹Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 89-92.

⁹⁸²*Auguste Comte and Positivism* [1865], (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), 78-82.

⁹⁸³*Autobiography* [1873], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 137-142.

remarked:

Mr. Carlyle has no faith in his age or his contemporaries; he is blind to the modern conditions of progress, and he turns from its complicated agencies in despair... At the same time he is looking for some fatal catastrophe which ought to befall us, but which never happens... he [thus] remains sulkily waiting in the cold.⁹⁸⁴

The same year, the *Leader* claimed that Carlyle's rejection of 'freedom and self-government' was the reason for 'the decline in his influence and popularity' adding:

Mr. Carlyle is now an old man... The "old man eloquent" is playing the part of Polyphemus, idly cursing... at the Ulysses of slow, but sure popular advancement, calmly and safely sailing way on its course.⁹⁸⁵

For its part, the *Saturday Review* claimed that 'no man of genius' had ever written anything so unjust to modern times as the author of '*Past and Present* and the *Latter-day Pamphlets*'.⁹⁸⁶ The following year, a contributor to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* scoffed that Carlyle 'mourned like a prophetic Gibbon over the Decline and Fall of Britain', unable to appreciate

this land of England, where not only justice, liberty, and right, are secured, so far as human institutions can secure them for all, but where a vast proportion of the inhabitants live in such comfort, plenty, and enlightened enjoyment, as was never before known, and hardly dreamt of, by the most far-seeing of past legislators.⁹⁸⁷

Finally, some years later, in 1867, a writer in *St. Paul's Magazine* pithily summed up 'Carlylism' as the belief that 'we are all going to the – Mischief!'⁹⁸⁸ As we will see in the 'Epilogue' to this thesis, such optimism did not last, and, with the onset of the 'Great Depression' (c. 1873-96), Carlyle's warnings came once again to be considered worthy of attention. However, for now, Carlyle found himself isolated amidst a cross-party consensus in favour of commerce, free trade, and representative government.

984'Carlyle's Frederick the Great', in *The Times* (26th Oct. 1858), 10.

985'Carlyle's Frederick the Great (Second Notice)', in *The Leader* (16th Oct. 1858), 1091.

986'Mr. Carlyle', in *The Saturday Review* (19th June 1858), 638-640 (638-639).

987'Carlyle: Mirage Philosophy', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXXXV (Feb. 1859), 127-154 (128, 133).

988'An Essay on Carlylism', in *St. Paul's Magazine*, I (Dec. 1867), 292-305 (292-293).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has suggested that the Saint-Simonian concept of a 'critical' era enabled Carlyle to make sense of 'democracy' and *laissez-faire* as historically necessary phenomena, by which the industrious classes shook off the superannuated institutions of the medieval past, thus clearing the way for the 'organic' industrialism of the future. In works such as 'Chartism', *Past and Present*, and the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle made creative use of this concept, extending the Saint-Simonian analysis of the French Revolution to Britain. In portraying 'democracy' and *laissez-faire* as necessary and indispensable, the Saint-Simonian concept of a 'critical' era allowed Carlyle to remain true to his youthful radicalism, particularly his hostility to the institutions of the oligarchic state. However, in keeping with the Saint-Simonian concept, Carlyle also argued that 'democracy' and *laissez-faire* had already served their negative, destructive purpose, and could no longer be allowed to continue. Following both Sismondi and the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle argued that the competition, over-production, unemployment, and under-consumption that characterised *laissez-faire* wreaked havoc upon the working classes, reducing them to a condition of dependence and moral degradation (this being, according to Carlyle, far worse than mere material poverty). Moreover, Carlyle argued, the Epicurean, utilitarian assumption that individual self-interest could provide an adequate basis for a political community (an assumption that was reflected in certain strands of mainstream political economy) was fundamentally flawed. With regard to 'democracy', Carlyle contended that purely political reforms, such as extension of the franchise, the People's Charter, and progressive adaptation of the 'English Constitution', would do nothing to solve the 'Condition-of-England question', which arose from the inner dynamics of the market itself. In making this argument, Carlyle cut across the conventional terms of British political discourse, and particularly the premises of Radicalism and Chartism. In doing so, he alienated many middle-class, Whiggish readers, but also won over a number of Chartists and Owenites, who began to make extensive use of Carlyle's ideas in interpreting the economic realities around them. In this sense, it might be suggested that some of the founding assumptions of modern British socialism, such as class analysis and class consciousness, proceeded not from the self-activity of the proletariat, but rather from the pen of Thomas Carlyle.

'Once More a Governed Commonwealth'

From *association* to the Organisation of Labour



Création des ateliers nationaux de terrassement au Champ-de-Mars (1848)

INTRODUCTION

There is a long-standing historiographical tradition of presenting Carlyle as a largely negative thinker, a latter-day Jeremiah who excoriated his contemporaries without offering positive solutions. For instance, Michael Levin claims that while 'Carlyle's critique' was 'incisive and powerful', 'his depiction of any alternative' was 'either non-existent or sketchy and anachronistic'.⁹⁸⁹ For his part, Simon Heffer suggests that Carlyle failed 'to offer anything original instead of democracy, save a retreat to feudalism'.⁹⁹⁰ Indeed, as we shall see, such accusations were frequently levelled at Carlyle by hostile contemporaries. This chapter will offer a reassessment of Carlyle, exploring some of his many positive proposals, particularly the 'Organisation of Labour' along

⁹⁸⁹Michael Levin, *The Condition of England Question: Carlyle, Mill, Engels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 68-69.

See also Philip Rosenberg, *The Seventh Hero: Thomas Carlyle and the Theory of Radical Activism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 139-140.

⁹⁹⁰Simon, *Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), 4.

quasi-military lines. As will be shown, Carlyle took this military metaphor from the Saint-Simonians, using it to present a radical conception of social reform in terms familiar to his readers.⁹⁹¹ In dealing with Carlyle's proposals for the 'Organisation of Labour', the chapter will also take issue with another common cliché of Carlyle, as an advocate of blind tyranny and despotism, or even a 'precursor' of twentieth-century totalitarianism.⁹⁹² In contrast, it will be argued that Carlyle was in fact heir to a much older aristocratic republican tradition, in which the wisest and most virtuous citizens were to be placed at the helm of the community, while still being subject to the rule of law and some measure of popular accountability. In this sense, instead of putting Carlyle's ideas regarding authority down to a supposedly congenital 'Calvinism',⁹⁹³ it will be argued that these in fact owed far more to a number of republican writers, updated through reference to Saint-Simonism. In particular, Carlyle followed the Saint-Simonians in designating 'captains of industry', 'artists' and 'scholars' as the aristocrats of the future, and the workplace as the new republic. Finally, the argument that has been made in a previous chapter, to the effect that Carlyle understood freedom as self-mastery, as achieved primarily through work, will be further developed. In particular, it will be suggested that Carlyle intended an authoritarian 'Organisation of Labour' as a means to drill recalcitrant, 'slavish' individuals into habits of work and discipline, thus (potentially) raising them to self-mastery, and preparing them for eventual emancipation. In this sense, Carlyle's ideas resembled what Gregory Claeys has recently called, with reference to John Stuart Mill, 'a sovereignty enhancing concept of paternalism, by which we can help others to help themselves'.⁹⁹⁴ Indeed, instead of placing Carlyle and Mill at opposite extremes of the political spectrum, the former representing 'positive liberty' and the latter 'negative',⁹⁹⁵ it will be suggested that the two men were in fact engaged in a running dialogue about the nature of co-operative labour, authority, and

991 As Hans Blumenberg has argued, metaphors can be used to domesticate the strange and alien, and are thus an important form of rhetoric. See Rüdiger Zill, '»Substrukturen des Denkens«: Grenzen und Perspektiven einer Metapherngeschichte nach Hans Blumenberg', in *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, ed. Bödeker (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2002), 244-247.

992 The strongest version of the argument is J. Salwyn Shapiro, 'Thomas Carlyle, Prophet of Fascism', in *Journal of Modern History*, 17:2 (1945), 97-115. However, even Roberto Romani passingly refers to 'the essence of Carlylism as the doctrine of a free hand in politics and morals' (*National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750-1914* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 242-245).

993 The classic statement is, as always, C. F. Harrold, 'The Nature of Carlyle's Calvinism', in *Studies in Philology*, 33:3 (1936), 475-486. More recently, Simon Heffer has referred to Carlyle's authoritarianism as a 'secularisation of the Calvinist idea of the elect' (*Moral Desperado*, 248), while John Morrow has suggested that Carlyle was indebted to 'seventeenth century proponents of Christian liberty', who believed in using compulsion against the 'ungodly' (*Thomas Carlyle* [London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006], 107-108). Though not referring specifically to 'Calvinism', Donald Winch implies that Carlyle, like Wordsworth, advocated a 'Christian government standing in loco parentis towards all its subjects' (*Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848-1914* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 69).

994 Gregory Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 16.

995 For a representative view of Mill as a proponent of 'negative liberty', see Isaiah Berlin, 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life', in his *Four Essays on Liberty*, 173-206.

'collective independence' from market forces.⁹⁹⁶ Finally, the chapter will demonstrate the important contribution that Carlyle's concept of the 'Organisation of Labour' made to the development of early British socialism, particularly amongst Chartists, Owenites, and Co-operators, a subject hitherto overlooked in the secondary literature.

I.

'THE MOST ABLE AND VIRTUOUS OF STATESMENT': CARLYLE AND THE LANGUAGE OF ARISTOCRATIC REPUBLICANISM (1823-1830)

Recent accounts of the republican tradition have tended to emphasise notions of 'non-domination' and 'active participation', suggesting that, in order for a state or political community to be free, all citizens must participate in the making of laws.⁹⁹⁷ However, while this might have been true of many Roman and 'neo-Roman' writers, it is only one side of the story. As Eric Nelson has recently pointed out, there was also a Greek tradition in republican thought, which did not particularly value either 'non-domination' or 'active participation'. Stretching back to Plato and Aristotle, this Greek tradition defined 'freedom' in terms of self-mastery, and living in accordance with the laws of nature. On this definition, only a small minority of individuals could be said to be truly free, the majority being slaves to their own passion and caprice. It followed that political authority ought to be entrusted to the minority, that is, to the wisest and most virtuous citizens, who would then guide the majority into conformity with the laws of nature, thus emancipating them from themselves. Thus, for such ancient Greek writers, it was axiomatic that the most desirable form of government was an aristocracy or monarchy.⁹⁹⁸ Indeed, such views were not confined exclusively to the ancient Greeks. For instance, Seneca, a Roman Stoic, in his *De clementia*, had sought to provide an apology for the rule of the Caesars. According to Seneca, during the late Republic, the Romans had lost their ability to live in accordance with the laws of nature, and thus could no longer be said to be meaningfully free. In contrast, under the guidance of wise and virtuous emperors, the community

⁹⁹⁶John Morrow has rightly stressed the importance that Carlyle attached to his own personal independence (*Thomas Carlyle*, 30-37), but it seems to me this insight might be pushed further, particularly regarding the 'Organisation of Labour'. I take the term 'collective independence' from Claeys, who writes of 'Mill's belief that self-dependence defined as collective independence would increasingly result *primarily* from collaborative and particularly co-operative labour' (*Mill and Paternalism*, 46, see also 170-172, 215). Tentatively, I suggest the term might also be applied to Carlyle.

⁹⁹⁷Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27-33; Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

⁹⁹⁸Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12-15, 42-44.

had since been steered back into conformity with the cosmic law, and thus, while most citizens were indubitably 'dominated', and deprived of their right to 'actively participate', they could, nonetheless, be said to be free.⁹⁹⁹

As has been noted in a previous chapter, the young Carlyle, writing under the influence of the ancient Stoics, had defined freedom in terms of self-mastery, and voluntary conformity to the laws of nature. For instance, in his *Life of Schiller* (1825), Carlyle wrote that Schiller's education consisted in 'enthusiasm gradually yielding to the sway of reason, gradually using itself to the constraints prescribed by sound judgement and more extensive knowledge'.¹⁰⁰⁰ Furthermore, Carlyle also made clear that only a small minority of individuals ever attained to such inner freedom. For example, in the preface to his translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (1827), Carlyle claimed that the 'faculties and feelings' of Goethe were 'not fettered or prostrated under the iron sway of Passion, but led and guided in kindly union under the mild sway of Reason', adding that this was 'the dim aim of every human soul, the full attainment of only a chosen few'.¹⁰⁰¹ Two years later, in 'Signs of the Times' (1829), Carlyle wrote that: 'one man that has a higher Wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, not than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than all men that have it not'.¹⁰⁰² Thus, Carlyle's early understanding of freedom as self-mastery, and insight into the true nature of things, implied elitism as a matter of course.

Moreover, such ideas could also provide a rationale for pedagogical authority. For instance, in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (as translated by Carlyle), Goethe had argued that 'what chiefly vindicates the practice of strict requisitions, of decided laws, is that genius, that native talent, is precisely the readiest to seize them, and yield them willing obedience'. Moreover, asked Goethe, 'does not such submission always turn to good account?'¹⁰⁰³ Authority, if exercised correctly, thus served as a means to the development and eventual self-determination of those subject to it. Moreover, Goethe made clear the nature of this development would vary from individual to individual. Given that children brought 'much into the world along with them', it was the 'duty' of education to 'unfold' the particular talents and dispositions of each pupil.¹⁰⁰⁴ For Goethe, the ideal

999Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 21-23. Of course, one did not have to have read Plato, Aristotle, or Seneca to be familiar with these ideas, which were common currency in European political thought.

1000*The Life of Friedrich Schiller* [1825], People's edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), 35.

1001'Goethe', preface to *Wilhelm Meister's Travels; or, The Renunciants. A Novel*, trans. Carlyle [1827], reprint (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1991), 18.

1002'Signs of the Times' [1829], in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, People's Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), II:246.

1003*Travels*, 222.

1004*Travels*, 137-138.

was that these differences might somehow be brought into harmony, 'each, in his own way, associated with many fellow-labourers, and striving towards the noblest aim'.¹⁰⁰⁵ Thus, according to Goethe, educational authority might serve not only as a means to the self-mastery and self-development of the individual, but also as means to promote the co-operation of divers individuals for pursuit of the common good.

Regarding politics and political authority, Carlyle's early writings contained evident traces of the aristocratic republican tradition outlined above. For instance, in an entry to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, published in 1823, Carlyle praised the British Prime Minister William Pitt for having exhibited:

a fervid enthusiasm for the cause of freedom, for the honour of his country, for all good and worthy things... Men called [Pitt] the 'Great Commoner'; he was listened to by the nation as its guardian and father... the most able and virtuous of statesmen... [he was of] no party, but of the party that love their country and labour for it.¹⁰⁰⁶

Moreover, in *German Romance* (1827), Carlyle translated a passage of Johann Musaeus' tale 'Libussa', in which an imaginary country had 'dwindled to a sort of Anarchy', where 'the strong oppressed the weak, the rich the poor, the great the little'. However, unwilling to further tolerate this state of affairs, 'the patriots, the honest citizens, whoever in the nation loved his country, joined together', and chose 'a Prince' to 'tame the froward, and exercise right and justice in the midst of us'. Significantly, this Prince was not 'the strongest, the boldest, or the richest', but rather 'the wisest'.¹⁰⁰⁷ Moreover, it is important to note that, while Carlyle might have espoused a certain elitism, he also made clear that obedience was to be elicited primarily through moral authority, rather than coercion or brute force. In doing so, he was particularly indebted to Goethe's notion of 'reverence', as set out in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*.¹⁰⁰⁸ For example, in *Wotton Reinfred* (1826-27), Carlyle made a distinction between 'reverence' and 'fear', claiming that it was man's 'chief glory that the strong can be made obedient to the weak; that we yield not to force but to goodness'.¹⁰⁰⁹ Similarly, in 'Voltaire' (1829), he stated that 'it is ever to be kept in mind, that not by material, but by moral power, are men

¹⁰⁰⁵*Travels*, 287.

¹⁰⁰⁶'William Pitt' [1823], reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays, Chiefly Biographical*, ed. Crockett [1897], new ed. (London: Gibbings & Company, 1901), 249-264.

¹⁰⁰⁷*German Romance: Translations from the German with Biographical and Critical Notices* [1827] (London: Chapman and Hall, 1898), I:104-107.

¹⁰⁰⁸See *Travels*, 137-138.

¹⁰⁰⁹'Wotton Reinfred: A Romance' [unfinished draft of a novel, written 1826-1827], in *The Last Words of Thomas Carlyle* (Boston MA: Dana Estates & Company, 1892), 113.

and their actions governed'.¹⁰¹⁰ What these various examples demonstrate is that Carlyle was, at this time, familiar with the language of aristocratic republicanism.

A DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE (1824-1830)

Before moving on to look at the Saint-Simonians, and particularly their ideas regarding authority and the 'Organisation of Labour', there is one final aspect of Carlyle's early thought that needs to be taken into consideration. As noted in the previous chapter, Carlyle, a jobbing author, deeply resented his dependence upon editors and publishers, as well as upon the fluctuating fortunes of the book-trade, experiencing this as a form of moral degradation. The corollary of this resentment was a desire for independence, particularly from the relations and imperatives of the market. For instance, in 1824, upon learning that his brother John also harboured literary aspirations, Carlyle encouraged him to first study medicine, writing:

It is a noble thing to have a profession by the end: it makes a man independent of all mortals; he is richer than a lord, for no *external* change can destroy the possession which he has acquired for himself... It appears to me that a man who is not born to some independency, if he means to devote himself to literature properly so called, even *ought* to study some profession which as a first preliminary will enable him to live.¹⁰¹¹

Thus, Carlyle recognised that the practising of a profession might provide an economic basis for independence. However, he also understood independence in terms of moral and intellectual integrity. Having experienced the moral degradations of the London book trade at first-hand, Carlyle retired to an isolated farmstead at Craigenputtock in the lowlands of Scotland, informing Goethe in 1828:

I came hither purely for this one reason: That I might not have to write for bread; might not be tempted to tell lies for money. This space of Earth is our own; and we can live in it and write and think as seems best to us.¹⁰¹²

1010 'Voltaire' [1829], *CME* II:123. See also 'Signs of the Times', 251, and TC to Goethe, 23rd May 1830, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1970-), 5:105-107.

1011 TC to John A. Carlyle, 1st Jan 1824, *CL* 3:3-4. See also TC to John A. Carlyle, 22nd May 1832, *CL* 6:158-160. As Stefan Collini notes, the 'professions' were valued chiefly as a means to preserve one's status as a 'gentleman', particularly one's independence and freedom from market relations. See his *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 30-31.

1012 TC to Goethe, 25th Sep. 1828, *CL* 4:408.

Indeed, Carlyle seems to have attached far more value to independence than to material wealth. As he explained in 'Jean Paul Richter Again' (1830): 'On the whole, it is not by money, or money's worth, that man lives and has his being'.¹⁰¹³ At this point, Carlyle understood independence in individual terms, attaching particular importance to his own independence. However, in the writings of the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle would find a concept of 'association', which would, over subsequent decades, provide him with a crucial resource in his attempts to theorise new forms of authority and collective independence from market relations.

II.

SAINT-SIMON, THE SAINT-SIMONIANS, AND 'AN ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS' (1825-1830)

As has been seen in the previous chapter, Saint-Simon had portrayed the French Revolution as an uprising of the industrious classes, who sought to overthrow the obsolete, parasitic institutions of the *ancien régime*. This aim having been successfully accomplished, Saint-Simon, along with a number of other thinkers, argued that the time had now come to put an end to the crises of the revolutionary era, through the development of a social science, and the establishment of a rational constitution, under the guidance of a new enlightened elite.¹⁰¹⁴ Indeed, this common generational desire took many forms, including the concept of industrialism, and what Annelien de Dijn has recently termed 'aristocratic liberalism'.¹⁰¹⁵ Moreover, as has been seen in the previous chapter, there was at this time a mounting anxiety concerning the social consequences of *laissez-faire*, thinkers such as Sismondi suggesting that the time had come to begin devising and implementing new forms of economic regulation. Indeed, such desires were not confined to intellectuals. As Michael Fitzsimmons has recently demonstrated, throughout the Restoration, French workers continued to exert pressure for the re-establishment of guilds and corporations, as a corrective to the shortcomings of *laissez-faire*.¹⁰¹⁶ In France, there was thus a growing sense of the necessity of

1013 'Jean Paul Richter Again' [Jan. 1830], *CME* III: 11-14.

1014 See Keith Michael Baker, 'Closing the French Revolution: Saint-Simon and Comte', in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, ed. Furet and Ozouf, Vol. 3, 'The Transformation of Political Culture 1789-1848' (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1989), 323-339.

1015 On 'industrialism' as a means to end the French Revolution, see Thomas F. Kaiser, 'Politics and political economy in the thought of the Ideologues', in *History of Political Economy*, 12:2 (1980), 141-160. On 'aristocratic liberalism' see Annelien de Dijn, *French Political Thought from Montesquieu to Tocqueville: Liberty in a Levelled Society?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), ch. 5.

regulation and organisation, and it was against this background that Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians wrote.

In the *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), which, as has been noted, Carlyle would later translate into English, Saint-Simon had argued that Luther ought to have made the state an 'institution for preventing the rich and powerful from oppressing the poor', and for 'improving the moral and physical condition of the most numerous class'. According to Saint-Simon, this could have been achieved through a 'general programme of works, designed to make the world as productive and as agreeable to inhabit as possible'.¹⁰¹⁷ However, elsewhere in the same work, Saint-Simon made abundantly clear that his aim was not to 'incite the poor to acts of violence against the rich and against the government'. Rather, he sought to persuade the 'artists, scholars, and captains of industry [*chefs des travaux industriels*]' to assume their role as 'the natural leaders' of 'the class of workers'.¹⁰¹⁸ Here, Saint-Simon expressed many of the same opinions as the young Carlyle regarding the role and responsibilities of political authority; however, he also introduced an important conceptual innovation, identifying artists, scholars, and 'captains of industry' as the leaders of the future.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the Saint-Simonians understood history in terms of an alternating series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras. Moreover, they believed that the recent history of Europe presented the spectacle of such a 'critical' era, which, having already accomplished its task, now risked plunging the continent into an ever-deepening anarchy. In an article published in 1826, P.-M. Laurent argued that 'modern philosophy', 'after having accomplished its work of destruction', 'must now renounce its revolutionary formulas, and become organic'. The task of this new philosophy would be to guide humanity towards a new era, which Laurent described in terms of social reintegration, and a united striving in a common cause. He wrote:

The essential preconditions of social life are the same today as they were in the past, namely, universal social ties... a general doctrine... and the regularised concert of all spiritual forces, so as to make the activities of individuals converge insofar as possible on a single aim, the well-being and prosperity of the greatest number.¹⁰¹⁹

1016Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *From Artist to Worker: Guilds, the French State, and the Organization of Labor, 1776-1821* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), ch. 4.

1017Saint-Simon, *Nouveau Christianisme, dialogues entre un conservateur et un novateur* (Paris: Bossange Père and A. Sautelet et Cie., 1825), 44-50.

1018*Nouveau Christianisme*, 78.

1019[P.-M. Laurent], 'Coup-d'Oeil historique sur le pouvoir spirituel', in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 77-80.

Indeed, the idea of harmonising the activities of individuals was highly similar to that expressed by Goethe in the passages of *Wilhelm Meister* referred to above. Moreover, in their expositions of the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon* (1829-1830), the Saint-Simonians echoed the *Nouveau Christianisme*, assuring their readers that they did not 'seek to bring about social upheaval or revolution, but rather a *transformation*, an *evolution*', guiding society towards '*universal association*', 'the ultimate organic era'.¹⁰²⁰

The Saint-Simonians further developed these proposals, partly through an interrogation of the works of Sismondi. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, the Saint-Simonians had accepted the latter's criticisms of *laissez-faire*, as well as his argument that political economy, i.e., the science of the production of material wealth, ought not be studied in abstraction from wider social, political, and moral concerns. However, the Saint-Simonians went beyond Sismondi, proposing a far more ambitious vision of the reintegration of economics with politics and morals.¹⁰²¹ For instance, in a review of Sismondi, published in 1826, the Saint-Simonian leader Enfantin agreed that the 'social power' ought to intervene so as to 'regulate the growth of wealth', but also asked whether

this power might not also preside over the progress of the sciences, over the development of sentiment and morality? Might education not come under its direction? In sum, instead of saying *laissez-faire* to the social power regarding knowledge [*science*], just as we say to it regarding industry, might it not be desirable for society to be organised in such a way that both intellectual and industrial work would be illuminated and directed by the social power?¹⁰²²

For the Saint-Simonians, central to this new organic era would be the 'moralization and regulation of industry'.¹⁰²³ More specifically, they proposed the 'peaceful organisation of the workers', as a means to put an end to 'the flagrant disorder that surrounds us'.¹⁰²⁴ Eventually, the

¹⁰²⁰*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année. 1829. Seconde Édition* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur and A. Mesnier, 1830), 212; *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année. 1829-1830* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur, 1830), 5-6.

¹⁰²¹A point made by Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Saint-Simon and the liberal origins of the socialist critique of Political Economy', in *La France et l'Angleterre au XIXe siècle: Echanges, représentations, comparaisons*, ed. Aprile and Bensimon (Paris: Editions Créaphis, 2006), 39-47.

¹⁰²²[Enfantin], review of the new edition of Sismondi's *Nouveaux Principes d'Économie Politique*, in *Le Producteur, journal philosophique de l'industrie, des sciences et des beaux-arts, tome cinquième* (Paris: Sautelet et Cie., 1826), 95-97.

¹⁰²³[Enfantin], 'Considérations sur les progrès de l'économie politique, dans ses rapports avec l'organisation sociale', in *Le Producteur*, tome cinquième, 39.

¹⁰²⁴*Religion Saint-Simonienne. Réunion Générale de la Famille. Séances des 19. et 21. Novembre 1831. Suivis par*

'state' would become an 'Association of Workers', distributing the 'means of production' to those most capable of 'putting them to use'.¹⁰²⁵ Moreover, this association would be a strict meritocracy, ensuring that each of its members was employed 'according to his capacity, and remunerated according to his works'.¹⁰²⁶ In the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians set out their utopia in the following terms:

Let us transport ourselves to a new world. It no longer falls to isolated proprietors and capitalists... to regulate... the fate of the workers... A *social* institution has been invested with these functions, so poorly fulfilled today; it is the *custodian* of all means of production; it presides over all material operations; it views things from the perspective of the whole, perceiving all parts of the industrial *workshop*; it is in contact with all localities, with all branches of industry, with all the workers; it can thus calculate general and individual needs, and distribute manpower and tools to where they are needed, or, in a word, direct production, harmonise it with consumption, and confide the means of production to the most deserving workers... In a word, industry is *organised*, everything is equilibrated, everything is foreseen; the *division of labour* is perfected, *the combination of efforts* becomes ever more powerful.¹⁰²⁷

In calling for association and the organisation of industry, the Saint-Simonians made repeated use of a military metaphor, which, as we shall see, would later become central to Carlyle's writings. For instance, in the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, they stated that 'society has already been organised *militarily*, but it has not yet been organised *industrially*'.¹⁰²⁸ For the Saint-Simonians, 'he who *produces*' could thus 'love glory' as much as 'he who *destroys*'.¹⁰²⁹ This military analogy of course implied strict, hierarchical authority. As the Saint-Simonians put it, each 'captain of industry' [*industriel*] would 'possess' a 'workshop, workers, and tools', in the way that 'a colonel today possesses a barracks, soldiers, and weapons'.¹⁰³⁰ Due to these authoritarian leanings, the Saint-Simonians have at times been portrayed as 'precursors' of twentieth-century totalitarianism.¹⁰³¹

Note sur le Mariage et le Divorce; Lue au Collège de la Religion Saint-Simonienne, le 17. octobre, par le Père Rodriguès (Paris: Éverat, 1831), 4.

1025 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 187. See also: 'l'industrie prend, dans l'avenir, une importance politique', *ibid.*, 210.

1026 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 179-183.

1027 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 193-194. See also [Enfantin], 'Considérations sur les progrès de l'économie politique, 47, and *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 281-282.

1028 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 193-194.

1029 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 208.

1030 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 208.

1031 See for instance Georg G. Iggers, *The Cult of Authority: The Political Philosophy of the Saint-Simonians* [1958], 2nd ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 2-3, 64, 77-79, 102-103, 183-193.

However, towards the end of the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians made clear that they intended authority to rely primarily on moral force, rather than compulsion:

our sole aim, is to bring about the organisation of a power that is *loved, cherished, and venerated*... the human species, after having so long known the *respect* that binds the weak to the strong, the *admiration* that makes intelligence to bow before genius, the *love* that joyously devotes itself to the man with whom the destinies of a people, of the whole world, seem tied; could you ever believe... that humanity has been forever disinherited of these noble traits? ¹⁰³²

Thus, like Carlyle, the Saint-Simonians optimistically assumed human beings to possess an innate faculty of reverence, which might, in the future, be recalled into activity.

In order to sustain their envisioned social order, the Saint-Simonians proposed an educational system divided into two distinct branches. The first branch, '*special or professional education*', would serve to 'transmit to individuals the skills necessary to the various kinds of work', whether 'poetic, intellectual or scientific, material or industrial'.¹⁰³³ To this end, pupils would be distributed between 'three great schools', one for 'the *fine arts*', one for 'the *sciences*', and one for '*industry*'.¹⁰³⁴ In such institutions, the aim would be to 'stimulate and observe the development of the aptitudes of individuals, in order to give them the support they require'.¹⁰³⁵ Indeed, according to the Saint-Simonians, this would be preferable to the anarchic distribution of work under *laissez-faire*, which frequently condemned individuals to trades for which they had little aptitude or interest. The second branch, '*general or moral education*', would seek to 'initiate individuals into social life', to 'inculcate' sentiments of 'love', and to direct 'all efforts towards the same social goal'.¹⁰³⁶ Perhaps most importantly, it would teach individuals that 'liberty' consisted 'above all' in '*loving and desiring* that which one *must* do'.¹⁰³⁷ According to the Saint-Simonians, modern commercial societies were defined by an advanced division of labour, which tended to inhibit any sense of a wider common good, such as that which had characterised the ancient republics. They explained:

In antiquity... each citizen, being called upon to discuss the interests of the community in the

1032 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 311.

1033 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 251.

1034 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 293.

1035 *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année*, 10-11.

1036 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 251.

1037 *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année*, 10-11.

public square, and to participate in the enterprises that these interests required, found himself placed at a point of view sufficiently elevated to conceive of his own actions in relation to the general interest... [Today, it is necessary] to heighten the intensity of moral education, which alone is capable of restoring individuals to the general point of view that has been undermined by the division of labour.¹⁰³⁸

So important was education to the Saint-Simonians, that they proposed the organisation of a 'teaching corps', again making use of the same military metaphor.¹⁰³⁹ As this suggests, the Saint-Simonian vision of education, like their theory of a new 'organic' era more generally, was certainly authoritarian. However, this authority was intended to serve as a means to the improvement and flourishing of individuals, as well as to the restoration of a sense of duty and belonging to modern societies. For this reason, the Saint-Simonians were confident that individuals would revere, and even love, such authority, recognising it as the condition of their own well-being and happiness. As we shall see, Carlyle, following his reading of the Saint-Simonian texts above, would come to express almost identical opinions in this regard.

III.

'BUDDING GERMS OF A NOBLER ERA': CARLYLE, 'ASSOCIATION', AND THE ORGANISATION OF LABOUR (1830-1839)

In his review of Carlyle's essay 'Signs of the Times', published in *Le Producteur*, the Saint-Simonian leader P.-M. Laurent had sympathised with Carlyle's lamentations over the increasing dependence of artisans and authors. However, according to Laurent, Carlyle erred in his nostalgia for outdated forms of individual independence, which were of little relevance to modern commercial societies, characterised by an advanced division of labour. Moreover, such nostalgia, Laurent argued, 'blinded' Carlyle 'to the power of association and the benefits of unity'.¹⁰⁴⁰ Similarly, in a handwritten note, now conserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, one of the Saint-Simonians had remarked that Carlyle understood 'that it is not enough to destroy and that it is time to build', but did not 'tell us by what principle future society will arrive at universal association'.¹⁰⁴¹ Carlyle seems to have taken such criticism to heart. In September 1830, one month after having received the first

1038 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 262-265.

1039 *Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 289.

1040 Paul-Mathieu Laurent, 'Caractère de notre époque, 2eme article', in *Organisateur*, 36 (18th Apr. 1830), 4.

1041 MS 7825/28, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris.

package of Saint-Simonian books (including Laurent's review), Carlyle made a telling reference in his journal to the Saint-Simonian catchword of 'Association'. He wrote:

I have strange glimpses of the power of spiritual union, of Association among men of like object. Therein lies the true Element of Religion... Society is a wonder of wonders; and Politics (in the right sense, far, very far from the common one) *is* the noblest science.¹⁰⁴²

This is hardly surprising, given that the Saint-Simonian vision of 'Association' not only expressed many of Carlyle's earlier ideas about virtue, moral authority, reverence, and education in highly systematic form, but also deduced a distinct programme of political reforms therefrom. In 'Characteristics' (1831), Carlyle continued to grapple with Laurent's criticisms, writing:

To understand man... we must look beyond the individual man and his actions or interests, and view him in combination with his fellows.... In Society an altogether new set of spiritual activities are evolved in him, and the old immeasurably quickened and strengthened... Such is SOCIETY, the vital articulation of many individuals into a new collective individual.¹⁰⁴³

Moreover, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-1834), Carlyle claimed to detect 'the first dim rudiments and already-budding germs of a nobler Era, in Universal History', citing 'without censure that strange aphorism of Saint-Simon's, "The golden age which a blind tradition has hitherto placed in the Past is Before us"'.¹⁰⁴⁴ Thus, it seems that Carlyle had been convinced by the Saint-Simonian vision of social, collective regeneration, and a new 'organic' era. Moreover, as will be argued in the following paragraphs, Carlyle also accepted the Saint-Simonians' idea of a quasi-military 'Organisation of Labour'.

In 'Characteristics' (Dec. 1831), Carlyle had written: 'Labour's thousand arms of sinew and of metal, all-conquering everywhere, from the tops of the mountains to the depths of the mine and the caverns of the sea, ply unceasingly for the service of man, - Yet Man remains unserved'. He then argued that it was time to shake off the rule '*sic vos non vobis*' ('thus do ye, but not for yourselves'), concluding that 'change, or the irresistible approach of change, is manifest everywhere'.¹⁰⁴⁵ Eight

1042 Journal entry dated 7th Sep 1830, in *Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. C. E. Norton (New York: The Grolier Club, 1898), 164-165.

1043 'Characteristics' [1831], *CME* IV:9-11.

1044 *Sartor Resartus* [written 1830-1831, first published 1833-1834], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 62, 179-180, 187.

1045 'Characteristics', 18-19.

months later, an unsigned article dealing with growth of the co-operative movement appeared in the *Monthly Repository*.¹⁰⁴⁶ Here, the author cited the above passage of Carlyle's 'Characteristics' in support of the co-operative cause, adding: 'Let Co-operative communities be established... Man is unserved. He must serve himself by his own intelligence and industry'.¹⁰⁴⁷ Indeed, the Saint-Simonian version of co-operation, namely, the 'Organisation of Labour' on quasi-military lines, surfaced repeatedly in Carlyle's writings during the early 1830s. For instance, in 'Characteristics', Carlyle referred to the 'younger nobler minds' of France (a probable reference to the Saint-Simonians), before declaring: 'here on Earth we are as Soldiers, fighting in a foreign land'. He then added: 'let us do it like Soldiers, with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy'.¹⁰⁴⁸ The following year, in 'Boswell's Life of Johnson' (1832), Carlyle made even more explicit use of the Saint-Simonian military metaphor, asking his readers:

do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged losels enough; every one of whom, if once dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling *per diem*, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety. The Courage that dares only *die*, is on the whole no sublime affair; necessary indeed, yet universal: pitiful when it begins to parade itself... The Courage we desire and prize is not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully.¹⁰⁴⁹

Similarly, in 'Corn-Law Rhymes', published the same year, Carlyle explained that not "Arms and the Man", 'but "Tools and the Man," that were now our Epic'.¹⁰⁵⁰ Moreover, like the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle suggested that the organisation of labour would be on strictly meritocratic lines. For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-1834), he exclaimed: 'Had the golden age of those new French Prophets, when it shall be: *à chacun selon sa capacité: à chaque capacité selon ses oeuvres*, but arrived!'.¹⁰⁵¹ Elsewhere in the same work, Carlyle blended the ideas of the Saint-Simonians with a maxim of Napoleon, calling for '*La carrière ouverte aux talens* (The Tools to him that can handle them), which is our ultimate Political Evangile, wherein alone can Liberty lie'.¹⁰⁵²

1046 During the late 1820s, there had been an enormous expansion of cooperative stores, 800 existing by the end of the decade. See Gregory Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium: From Moral Economy to Socialism, 1815-1860* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), 54-56.

1047 'Co-Operation', in *Monthly Repository*, vol. VI, no. LXVIII (Aug. 1832), 521-528.

1048 'Characteristics', *CME* IV:38.

1049 'Boswell's Life of Johnson', 120.

1050 'Corn-Law Rhymes' [1832], *CME* IV:207.

1051 'Boswell's Life of Johnson' [1832], *CME* IV:93.

1052 *Sartor Resartus*, 136; repeated verbatim in 'Mirabeau' [1837], *CME* V:207. For similar statements, see also 'Sir Walter Scott' [1838], *CME* VI:34-35.

As noted above, Saint-Simon had identified not only 'captains of industry', but also 'scholars' and 'artists' as the leaders of the future. In this sense, the Saint-Simonians stood not only for an organisation of labour, but also for an organisation of literature. Shortly after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle noted in his journal: 'Authors must *unite*; must form themselves into a Corporation, into a Church'.¹⁰⁵³ A few months later, he predicted in a letter that the 'poor Bookseller Guild' would 'ere long be found unfit for the strange part it now plays in our European world; and give place to new and higher Arrangements, of which the coming shadows are already becoming visible'.¹⁰⁵⁴ However, there are reasons to believe that Carlyle looked forward to the organisation of literature less as a means to higher wages, and more as a way to escape from dependence upon the fluctuating fortunes of the market. For instance, in a letter to Mill written in 1837, Carlyle deplored the fact that he might one day find 'work, work in breathless superfluity', only to 'tomorrow' be 'whistled down the wind, left to go and die'. He then asked Mill if the *London and Westminster Review* might not offer him 'some engagement of some permanence', adding that '[if] your *maximum* of wages will meet my *minimum* of necessities, then I will joyfully say *Done*'.¹⁰⁵⁵ It might therefore be inferred that Carlyle, in line with the criticisms of the Saint-Simonians, had ceased to yearn after older forms of individual independence, and had begun to look forward to new forms of collective independence, namely, the organisation of literature. This is, of course, a conjecture. However, as will be seen, such ideas would become increasingly evident in Carlyle's later writings, particularly his essay on 'Chartism'.

CARLYLE, REVERENCE, AND 'LOYAL OBEDIENCE TO THE HEROIC' (1832-1839)

As we have seen, both the young Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians had argued that authority relied primarily on moral force, rather than coercion. In particular, both Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians suggested that human beings possessed an innate faculty of reverence, which might once more be called into activity in the future. Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle proceeded to clarify his ideas on the subject. In a memoir written early in 1832, Carlyle recalled that while his father had ever eschewed 'slavish Fear', he had always been capable of 'Awe'. In this sense, 'from the heart and practically even more than in words an independent man, he was by no means an insubordinate one'.¹⁰⁵⁶ In 'Boswell's Life of Johnson', published later the same year,

¹⁰⁵³Journal entry dated 2nd Nov 1831, in *Two Notebooks*, 223.

¹⁰⁵⁴TC to Macvey Napier, 6th Feb. 1832, *CL* 6:117. See also TC to John A. Carlyle, 2nd Dec. 1832, *CL* 6:270, 273.

¹⁰⁵⁵TC to JSM, 30th Oct. 1837, *CL* 9:337-338.

¹⁰⁵⁶'James Carlyle' [Jan. 1832], in *Reminiscences*, ed. C. E. Norton, Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972), 6-7.

Carlyle explained that '*Hero-worship*', consisted not in 'Sycophancy', but rather in 'Reverence'.¹⁰⁵⁷ In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle looked forward to a time when men would 'for ever cast away Fear', and rise 'into perennial Reverence', adding that '*Hero-worship*' constituted 'the corner-stone of living rock, whereon all Polities for the remotest time may stand secure'.¹⁰⁵⁸ Carlyle thus by no means advocated blind submission to tyrants, which he associated with the mindset of the 'slave', but rather voluntary obedience to the wise and the virtuous. Indeed, as Carlyle made clear, this was essential to the existence of any kind of cohesive polity.

According to Carlyle, education would play a central role in this process. Like the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle called for the creation of a teaching corps, suggesting that 'fashioning the souls of a generation by Knowledge' might one day 'rank on a level with blowing their bodies to pieces by Gunpowder'.¹⁰⁵⁹ Moreover, Carlyle also seems to have accepted the Saint-Simonians' division of education into two branches, one designed to transmit the skills necessary to work, and the other intended to inculcate a sense of duty and reverence for authority. Regarding the first branch, Carlyle claimed in 'Diderot' that the Jesuits had rightfully sought to 'decipher the talent of a young vague Capability', and to then 'take him by the hand, and train him to a spiritual trade, and set him up in it, with tools, shop and good-will'.¹⁰⁶⁰ With regard to the second branch, Carlyle argued in 'Goethe's Works' (1832) that the 'chief aim of Education' ought to be to 'enlighten this principle of reverence for the great, to teach us reverence, and whom we are to revere and admire'.¹⁰⁶¹ As the previous chapter has shown, Carlyle accepted democracy as a fact. In a manuscript written in 1835, he made clear that the role of education would be not to counteract, but rather to enlighten and facilitate popular deliberation. Carlyle wrote:

Whether such new results, inevitably fast approaching, shall be wise and beneficent, or unwise, false and ruinous, will depend simply on what wisdom is in the people, or what want of wisdom. To have such wisdom as exists universally imparted; in other words to have the people taught and well taught, is therefore at this moment the most important task of all.¹⁰⁶²

1057'Boswell's Life of Johnson', 77, 80. See also 90-91, 'Death of Goethe' [1832], *CME* IV:47, and 'Goethe's Works' [1832], *CME* IV:139-141.

1058*Sartor Resartus*, 190. See also 'Sir Walter Scott', 23.

1059*Sartor Resartus*, 82.

1060'Diderot' [1833], *CME* V:11.

1061'Goethe's Works', 139-141.

1062'National Education' [3rd Feb. 1835], MS in National Library of Scotland, published in *CL* 8:29-36. See also TC to John A. Carlyle, 16th Feb. 1835, *CL* 8:50. Referring to this manuscript, Simon Heffer writes: 'Carlyle is not advocating a socialist solution, but argues that if responsible government does not provide some form of education for these people they will fall prey to such elements of socialism as trade unions and other radical political

Thus, it seems, Carlyle had used the writings of the Saint-Simonians to sharpen his earlier ideas regarding education, including those he had derived from Goethe. Like the Saint-Simonians, he now argued that there should be two forms of education, one serving to identify the aptitudes of the individual, and to develop them in preparation for work, and another intended to promote a sense of reverence for worth and merit. As we shall see in the following section, the subject of education would be central to Carlyle's first comprehensive intervention in British politics, 'Chartism'. This brought together many of the Saint-Simonian themes scattered throughout his previous writings, making an original contribution to British political debate, and sparking considerable controversy in the periodical press.

'CHARTISM' (1839)

As has been noted in a previous section, Carlyle had immediately taken up the Saint-Simonian idea of a quasi-military 'Organisation of Labour', making use of it in several articles written during the 1830s. However, in 'Chartism', the subject was hinted at only obliquely. Here, Carlyle endorsed 'the claim of the Free Working-man to be raised to a level, we might say, with the Working Slave', that is, to have 'food', 'shelter', and 'due guidance' imparted to him 'in return for his labour'.¹⁰⁶³ While the term 'due guidance' suggests that Carlyle envisaged an authoritarian solution to this question, he did not develop the point further. However, in another passage of 'Chartism', Carlyle wrote:

[It is not] to be supported by roundsmen systems, by never so liberal parish doles, or lodged in free and easy workhouses when distress overtakes him... It is 'for justice' that [the labourer] struggles; for 'just wages,' - not in money alone! An ever-toiling inferior, he would fain (though as yet he knows it not) find for himself a superior that should lovingly and wisely govern: is not that too the 'just wages' of his service done? It is for a manlike place and relation, in this world where he sees himself a man, that he struggles.¹⁰⁶⁴

Indeed, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Carlyle's central concern regarding the 'Condition-

associations' (Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, 151). However, this is highly anachronistic, projecting late twentieth-century (Thatcherite) notions of socialism back into the early nineteenth century. In reality, early French socialism, particularly that of the Saint-Simonians, tended to be highly authoritarian, and preoccupied with class conciliation, social re-organisation, and, in sum, 'responsible government'. See for instance Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Saint-Simon and the liberal origins of the socialist critique of Political Economy', in *La France et l'Angleterre au XIXe siècle: Echanges, représentations, comparaisons*, ed. Aprile and Bensimon (Paris: Editions Créaphis, 2006), 39-47.

¹⁰⁶³'Chartism' [1839], *CME* VI:169.

¹⁰⁶⁴'Chartism' [1839], *CME* VI:123.

of-England question' had not been material poverty, but rather dependence, and the moral corruption it entailed. As the above passage of 'Chartism' suggests, the corollary was that, in proposing solutions, Carlyle attached less value to 'wages', and material abundance, than to moral integrity and autonomy. Moreover, it seems that Carlyle believed that authority, 'due guidance', might serve as a means to liberate the labourer from dependence, and restore him to a moral, dignified existence.

Elsewhere in 'Chartism', Carlyle set out his opinions regarding the nature of authority. As noted above, the young Carlyle had been familiar with a language of aristocratic republicanism, according to which the wisest and most virtuous citizens were to be entrusted with authority, which they would then exercise for the good of the community as a whole. One year previous to the publication of 'Chartism', Carlyle had, in the course of a lecture, described ancient Rome as 'a very tumultuous kind of polity', informing his listeners:

I cannot join in the lamentations made by some over the downfall of the Republic when Caesar took hold of it. It had been but a constant struggling scramble for prey, and it was well to end it, and to see the wisest, clearest, and most judicious man of them place himself at the top of it all.¹⁰⁶⁵

In 'Chartism', Carlyle, in line with the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, defined the 'wise man' as he who had fathomed the laws of the universe, who had 'insight into what is what'. According to Carlyle, it was this man who was '*fit* to administer, to direct, and guidingly command', on the grounds that 'his soul is wiser, clearer – is better and nobler'. Moreover, Carlyle made clear that authority 'must bring benefit along with it, or men, of the ordinary strength of men, will fling it out'.¹⁰⁶⁶ Similarly, elsewhere in the essay, he emphasised that the 'right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, held in the true course by him', implied a corresponding 'duty, on both sides'.¹⁰⁶⁷ Thus, to be legitimate, authority had to rest upon wisdom, and to be exercised for the good of those subject to it. According to Carlyle, this kind of authority and obedience was essential to the existence of a political community. As he explained:

Not towards the impossibility, 'self-government' of a multitude by a multitude; but towards some possibility, government by the wisest, does bewildered Europe struggle... The relation

¹⁰⁶⁵*Lectures on the History of Literature* [Apr.-July 1838], ed. Greene (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1892), 46.

¹⁰⁶⁶'Chartism', 135.

¹⁰⁶⁷'Chartism', 144.

of the taught to their teacher, of the loyal subject to his guiding king, is, under one shape or another, the vital element of human Society; indispensable to it, perennial in it; without which, as a body reft of its soul, it falls down into death, and with horrid noisome dissolution passes away and disappears.¹⁰⁶⁸

In sum, Carlyle appears to have continued to hold to the aristocratic republicanism of his earlier writings. Indeed, in 'Chartism', he made the classical origins of his ideas explicit, writing: 'In Rome and Athens, as elsewhere, if we look practically, we shall find that it was not by loud voting and debating of many, but by wise insight and ordering of a few that the work was done'.¹⁰⁶⁹

However, Carlyle's call for 'Universal Education' introduced a certain tension into his thought in this regard. The task of education, he argued, would be to 'impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think, and yet who could in that case think'. Continuing, he wrote:

These Twenty-four million labouring men, if their affairs remain unregulated, chaotic, will burn ricks and mills; reduce us, themselves and the world into ashes and ruin. Simply their affairs cannot remain unregulated, chaotic; but must be regulated, brought into some kind of order. What intellect were able to regulate them?... No one great and greatest intellect can do it. What can? Only Twenty-four million ordinary intellects, once awakened into action; these, well presided over, may.¹⁰⁷⁰

This opened up the possibility that the rule of the wisest might not be an end in itself, but rather a means to enlighten the democracy, and prepare its members for some degree of participation in government.¹⁰⁷¹ As one reviewer noted, education ought to be understood not as 'something confined to the walls of a school', but rather as 'the harmonious cultivation of all man's faculties, the proportionate and just development of all the elements of his moral and intellectual being; a formation of character, a calling forth of feeling, a creating of habits, resulting in a certain moral tone, moral harmony and moral character'.¹⁰⁷² Moreover, the reviewer adduced Carlyle's proposals regarding education as proof that he did not seek to turn back the rise of democracy, but rather to

1068'Chartism', 146.

1069'Chartism', 145.

1070'Chartism', 175-177.

1071As Morrow points out, Carlyle, in his writings on universal education, argued that 'the power of the state and the influence of elites should be used to stimulate the population rather than make them passive recipients of care and attention'. In this sense, he differed from Tory paternalists (*Thomas Carlyle*, 99-100).

1072'Chartism and Church Extension', in *The British and Foreign Review*, 11 (1840), 1-31 (15-16).

guide and to enlighten it. As the reviewer explained, even if 'governors' were 'as wise as it is possible to conceive', they would not necessarily 'meet with loyalty, or willingness to profit by directing influence'. For this to happen, it would be necessary to appeal to the 'governing principle in every man, to which he may pay unconditional submission and reverence; and the more this is developed, the more willing will be his recognition of the claims to partial or general obedience which others may possess in virtue of superior knowledge, or even of the possession of lawful authority'.¹⁰⁷³ Indeed, one Chartist reviewer clearly perceived that Carlyle's proposals regarding education were intended to complement, rather than counteract, democracy. Writing in the *Northern Star*, the reviewer praised Carlyle for identifying 'the intellect of the masses as the only source from which real reform can emanate'.¹⁰⁷⁴

'HERO-WORSHIP' AND THE ORGANISATION OF LITERATURE (1840-1843)

Following the publication of 'Chartism', Carlyle, in line with the Saint-Simonian vision of a new 'organic' era, continued to argue for a solution to the plight of the labouring classes, for organisation, and for the reassertion of authority. Indeed, as Carlyle put it in a lecture delivered in 1840, the task was now to 'bridle-in that great devouring, self-devouring French Revolution; to *tame* it, so that its intrinsic purpose can be made good, that it may become *organic*'.¹⁰⁷⁵ In the same lecture, Carlyle further developed his earlier ideas regarding the Organisation of Literature. In the course of the lectures, Carlyle declared his belief that 'Union, organisation spiritual and material, a far nobler than any Popedom or Feudalism in their truest days', was 'coming for the world; sure to come'.¹⁰⁷⁶ Indeed, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the characterisation of 'Popedom' and 'Feudalism' as the archetype of 'organisation' was one of the signature doctrines of the Saint-Simonians. In the lectures, Carlyle also advocated the 'Organisation of the Literary Guild'. However, he implied that this was not intended primarily to enrich authors, but rather to secure them some minimal income, thus delivering them from the tyranny of book-sellers. As Carlyle put it, 'that one man wear the clothes, and take the wages, of a function which is done by quite another' was 'not right' but 'wrong'. However, he then added, 'one remark I must not omit':

To give our Men of Letters stipends, endowments and all furtherance of cash, will do little

¹⁰⁷³'Chartism, by Thomas Carlyle', in *The British and Foreign Review*, 12 (1840), 303-335 (322-323).

¹⁰⁷⁴Review of 'The British and Foreign Quarterly Review, or, European Quarterly Journal, no. 24', in *The Northern Star* (6th Nov. 1841), 3.

¹⁰⁷⁵*On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 241-242. See also *The French Revolution* [1837], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1906), II:173.

¹⁰⁷⁶*On Heroes*, 137.

towards the business... for a genuine man, it is no evil to be poor... there ought to be Literary Men poor, - to show whether they are genuine or not!... Who knows but, in that same 'best possible organisation,' as yet far off, Poverty may still enter as an important element?¹⁰⁷⁷

Indeed, Carlyle himself seems to have valued his own income only insofar as it served to underwrite his independence. Thanks to the success of his *French Revolution*, he could now rely upon a minimal revenue, and was thus in a much stronger position regarding his dealings with editors and book-sellers. As he informed his brother shortly after the appearance of the book, he was no longer 'a galleyslave', but 'free'.¹⁰⁷⁸ Moreover, over subsequent years, Carlyle played an active part in lobbying for a new Copyright Act, arguing in 1839 that 'all useful labour' was 'worthy of recompense'.¹⁰⁷⁹ Again, there is reason to believe that Carlyle intended this less as a means to the enrichment of authors, than to the securing of their intellectual independence, particularly from the patronage of political parties. For instance, in a letter written the same year, Thackeray stated that 'criticism has been a party matter with us', and 'literature a poor political lackey'. He then added: 'it is Carlyle who has worked more than any other to give it its independence'.¹⁰⁸⁰ The fact that Carlyle's literary fortunes continued to rise over subsequent years did little to alter his opinions in this regard. For instance, in 1841, he wrote to his brother:

[The publisher] Fraser offers me £75 *in hand* for this volume (the munificent man!)... Often it strikes me as if I had no need of more money; as if money could really do no more *good* to me at all: having clothes to wear and a house and food convenient in it, is one not a *free* man, freer than most Dukes & Kings are?¹⁰⁸¹

Indeed, this would have been in keeping with the Stoic belief that material things were 'indifferent' to the good life, the latter being defined rather in terms of moral integrity and autonomy. Having already secured an income sufficient to guarantee his independence, Carlyle thus felt little need for more. As we shall see in the following section, this is an argument to which Carlyle would return in *Past and Present*, applying it not only to authors, but to workers in general.

In the years following the delivery of his lectures, Carlyle continued to develop his ideas

¹⁰⁷⁷*On Heroes*, 167-168.

¹⁰⁷⁸TC to Alexander Carlyle, 26th Nov. 1837, *CL* 9:354.

¹⁰⁷⁹'Petition on the Copyright Bill' [1839], *CME* VI:187-188.

¹⁰⁸⁰Thackeray to his mother, 1839, cited in Anne Ritchie, 'Chapters from some Unwritten Memoirs', in *Macmillan's Magazine*, LXVI (Sep. 1892), 349.

¹⁰⁸¹TC to Alexander Carlyle, 7th Jan. 1841, *CL* 13:9.

regarding the 'Organisation of the Literary Guild'. For instance, in 1843, he informed Charles Dickens that it was 'urgently desirable that "Authors," or Persons who lead the Public Mind whatever title they may bear, should gradually form some kind of Brotherhood with one another, and become an organised Corporation'.¹⁰⁸² Particularly interesting in this regard is a manuscript penned by Carlyle in 1842. Here, he pondered whether antiquarian publishing societies, which operated on a cooperative, profit-sharing basis, might not serve as a model for literature as a whole.¹⁰⁸³ He wrote:

might not Authors of true character combine; form unions, perhaps give mutual certificates... Not isolation any longer but mutual help... O heaven, I see in this invention of Club Publicn, afar off, as from a Pisgah height, deliverance from the tyranny of Book [sellers] altogether.¹⁰⁸⁴

The implication here is that co-operation between authors might serve as a means to secure their collective independence, from the chicaneries of booksellers, and from the fluctuating fortunes of the book trade. Indeed, Carlyle continued to attach great importance to his own independence, informing his sister in 1847 that 'these poor Books of mine', 'have become a kind of *landed property* to me, and yield a certain *rent* more or less considerable, every year'.¹⁰⁸⁵ Moreover, in a subsequent letter, he rejoiced to 'have money to buy meal and broadcloth with', adding: 'Really one feels, with one's head getting grey, and one's heart long tempered in the Stygian waters, very *independent* indeed'.¹⁰⁸⁶

'THE PROBLEM OF THE WHOLE FUTURE': THE 'ORGANISATION OF LABOUR' in *PAST AND PRESENT* (1843)

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle set out a far more comprehensive and ambitious vision of the

1082TC to [Charles Dickens], 18th May 1843, *CL* 16:171-172. See also TC to John Johnstone, 4th June 1843, *CL* 16:191, and TC to unidentified correspondent, 13th May 1845, *CL* 19:69.

1083For an example, see F. J. Levy, 'The Founding of the Camden Society', in *Victorian Studies*, 7:3 (1964), 295-305. Carlyle tended to dismiss the antiquarian societies as 'Dryasdust'. See for instance 'An Election to the Long Parliament' [1844], *CME* VII:77.

1084MS in Victoria and Albert Museum [written 1842], published as 'Carlyle and the Book Clubs: A New Approach to Publishing?', ed. Henderson, in *Publishing History*, 6 (1979), 49-53. See also TC to David Laing, 10th Feb. 1844, *CL* 17:261.

1085TC to Jean Carlyle Aitken, 7th May 1847, *CL* 21:206. Carlyle's italics. As J. G. A. Pocock has noted, landed property was seen to guarantee a man's independence, and his ability to participate freely in public life. See his *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 3.

1086TC to Jean Carlyle Aitken, 25th Dec. 1847, *CL* 22:180. Carlyle's italics.

'Organisation of Labour' than he had done in previous texts. In *Past and Present*, he implied that the Saint-Simonians had been incapable of realising their theories in practice, a task which thus fell to the British. Carlyle wrote:

Alas, what a business will this be, which our Continental friends, groping this long while somewhat absurdly about it and about it, call 'Organisation of Labour;'—which must be taken out of the hands of absurd windy persons, and put into the hands of wise, laborious, modest and valiant men, to begin with it straightway.¹⁰⁸⁷

As Carlyle made clear, the 'Organising of Labour' was 'the Problem of the whole Future, for all who will in future pretend to govern men'.¹⁰⁸⁸ Or, as he put it elsewhere in *Past and Present*: 'All human interests, combined human endeavours, and social growths in this world, have, at a certain stage of their development, required organising: and Work, the grandest of human interests, does now require it'.¹⁰⁸⁹ Moreover, in making this point, Carlyle again employed the Saint-Simonians' military analogy, asking:

Who can despair of Governments that passes a Soldiers' Guardhouse, or meets a redcoated man on the streets... Multiform ragged losels, runaway apprentices, starved weavers, thievish valets; an entirely broken population, fast tending towards the treadmill. But the persuasive sergeant came; by tap of drum enlisted, or formed lists of them, took heartily to drilling them;—and he and you have made them this!... O Heavens, if we saw an army ninety-thousand strong, maintained and fully equipt, in continual real action and battle against Human Starvation, against Chaos, Necessity, Stupidity, and our real 'natural enemies,' what a business were it!¹⁰⁹⁰

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle identified two prime movers in the 'Organisation of Labour', namely the State and individual 'Captains of Industry'. Regarding the State, he wrote that 'governing', was 'man's highest work', when 'done *well*', and, given the failures of *laissez-faire*, some form of 'Legislative interference' had become 'indispensable'.¹⁰⁹¹ Three years after the publication of *Past*

¹⁰⁸⁷*Past and Present* [1843], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1912), 188.

¹⁰⁸⁸*Past and Present*, 247-248.

¹⁰⁸⁹*Past and Present*, 265.

¹⁰⁹⁰*Past and Present*, 250-253.

¹⁰⁹¹*Past and Present*, 85, 254-255. C.f. Simon Heffer, who claims that 'there is never any hint that Carlyle has faith in state machinery to carry out the necessary reform; he was never a socialist. It would be up to individuals...' (*Moral Desperado*, 229).

and *Present*, Carlyle sent a copy of his *Cromwell* to Sir Robert Peel. As the accompanying letter suggests, Carlyle hoped that the 'Organisation of Labour' would heal the rift between civil society and state, binding the two together:

Will you be pleased to accept from a very private citizen of the Community this Copy of a Book, which he has been engaged in putting together, while you our most conspicuous citizen were victoriously labouring in quite other work. Labour... may claim brotherhood with labour... In any case, citizens who feel grateful to a citizen are permitted and enjoined to testify that feeling, each in such manner as he can.¹⁰⁹²

However, in *Past and Present*, Carlyle placed most of his emphasis on the initiative of individual 'Leaders of Industry', or, as he also put it, the 'Industrial Aristocracy'.¹⁰⁹³ As Carlyle explained, the 'immense Problem of Organising Labour, and first of all of Managing the Working Classes', would 'have to be solved by those who stand practically in the middle of it; by those who themselves work and preside over work'.¹⁰⁹⁴ According to Carlyle, the Captains of Industry currently followed 'Mammon', exploiting and neglecting their workers, and thus found themselves held up to popular opprobrium, and begirt upon all sides with 'desperate Trades' Unionism and Anarchic Mutiny'. However, if the Captain of Industry were to accept his duties towards his workers, and strive to improve their condition, and to lead them in pursuit of a common good, the latter would begin to 'honour' and to 'love' him, 'as a true ruler and captain'.¹⁰⁹⁵ In order to facilitate this reconciliation, Carlyle proposed a system of profit-sharing, similar to that which he had contemplated regarding co-operative publishing. He asked:

Whether, in some ulterior, perhaps some not far-distant stage of this 'Chivalry of Labour,' your Master-Worker may not find it possible, and needful, to grant his Workers permanent *interest* in his enterprise and theirs? So that it become, in practical result, what in essential fact and justice it ever is, a joint enterprise; all men, from the Chief Master down to the lowest Overseer and Operative, economically as well as loyally concerned for it?¹⁰⁹⁶

'Your gallant battle-hosts and work-hosts', Carlyle wrote, 'will need to be made loyally yours; they must and will be regulated, methodically secured in their just share of conquest under you; - joined

1092TC to Sir Robert Peel, 19th June 1846, *CL* 20:211-212.

1093*Past and Present*, 261, 241.

1094*Past and Present*, 259-260.

1095*Past and Present*, 282-283.

1096*Past and Present*, 271.

with you in veritable brotherhood, sonhood, by quite other and deeper ties than those of temporary day's wages'.¹⁰⁹⁷ Indeed, this would be to the benefit of the Captains of Industry themselves, who would receive 'noble loyalty in return for noble guidance'.¹⁰⁹⁸ As with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle hoped that this would provide a peaceful outlet for the virtue and the courage that had once been expressed through war, replacing the 'Chivalry of Fighting' with 'a noble Chivalry of Work'.¹⁰⁹⁹

As Carlyle made clear, the 'Organisation of Labour', whether carried out by the State or by individual Captains of Industry', was intended to serve not as a means to higher wages or material abundance, but rather to the moral regeneration of individuals, and the reintegration of the community as a whole. Carlyle did, indeed, state that the slogan of "A fair day's-wages for a fair day's-work" was 'as just a demand as Governed men ever made of Governing'.¹¹⁰⁰ However, beyond this, he attached very little importance to wages, arguing that the "wages" of every noble Work do yet lie in Heaven or else Nowhere'.¹¹⁰¹ Continuing, Carlyle explained:

Was it thy aim and life-purpose to be filled with good things for thy heroism; to have a life of pomp and ease, and be what men call 'happy,' in this world, or in any other world? I answer for thee deliberately, No. The whole spiritual secret of the new epoch lies in this, that thou canst answer for thyself, with thy whole clearness of head and heart, deliberately, No!... Thou wilt never sell thy Life, or any part of thy Life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart; let the price be Nothing: thou *hast* then, in a certain sense, got All for it! The heroic man, - and is not every man, God be thanked, a potential hero? - has to do so, in all times and circumstances.¹¹⁰²

Moreover, Carlyle recommended such an attitude not only to workers, but also to their employers. The latter, he argued, ought to aspire not to possess the maximum of money, but to have 'ruled and fought not in a Mammonish but in a Godlike spirit; to have had the hearts of my people bless me, as a true ruler and captain of the people; to have felt my own heart bless me'.¹¹⁰³ Indeed, this would have been in keeping with the Stoic doctrine that material things were relatively 'indifferent' to the good life, the latter consisting rather in moral integrity and autonomy, particularly, according to

¹⁰⁹⁷*Past and Present*, 263.

¹⁰⁹⁸*Past and Present*, 265.

¹⁰⁹⁹*Past and Present*, 263.

¹¹⁰⁰*Past and Present*, 18.

¹¹⁰¹*Past and Present*, 196.

¹¹⁰²*Past and Present*, 196-197.

¹¹⁰³*Past and Present*, 283.

Carlyle, as achieved through work. As Carlyle wrote to his brother three years after the publication of *Past and Present*:

Never mind a whit what 'monies' you make or fail to make: that is not the question at all. So long as you stand on your own feet by your own industrious toil and the bounty of our common Father alone, no man is *richer* than you in the money sense; many are not half so rich. Wretched slaves with big bags of dollars or guineas; and not a thought or a purpose within the skin of them that can make a *man* rich! ¹¹⁰⁴

Thus, it seems that for Carlyle, what mattered in the 'Organisation of Labour' was not so much money, as independence.

At first sight, this claim might seem to sit uneasily with the authoritarian nature of Carlyle's proposals. Indeed, as the military analogy implies, Carlyle, like the Saint-Simonians, envisaged the 'Organisation of Labour' on strictly authoritarian lines. However, as had been the case with the proposals that Carlyle made regarding education in 'Chartism', there was an important tension in his thought. As we have seen in a previous chapter, Carlyle defined 'freedom' in terms of self-mastery, and an ability to live in accordance with the laws of nature, particularly through work. In contrast, for Carlyle, 'slavery' meant slavery to one's own passions and lower urges. In this sense, to compel a 'slave' to work, and to submit to the laws of the universe, was in fact an act of 'emancipation', which might, eventually, enable him to become master of himself. As Carlyle put it in a letter to his brother in 1842, a year previous to *Past and Present*, regarding a common acquaintance:

He has proved himself *unfit* to be a *master* in any sort, master even of himself: it will literally be good for him that he be a *servant*, and kept safe in *subjection*, till he learn a variety of essential things. His appointment to that servile condition, if he execute *it* well, may really be the beginning of good to him. ¹¹⁰⁵

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle put forward a similar argument, placing particular emphasis on work as a means to emancipation and self-mastery. He wrote:

Liberty? The true liberty of a man, you would say, consisted in his finding out, or being

1104TC to Alexander Carlyle, 3rd Mar. 1846, *CL* 20:132.

1105TC to Alexander Carlyle, 5th Feb. 1842, *CL* 14:35-36. See also TC to John Gibson Lockhart, 5th Apr. 1842, *CL* 14:122-123.

forced to find out the right path, and to walk thereon. To learn, or to be taught, what *work* he actually was able for; and then, by permission, persuasion, and even compulsion, to set about doing of the same!¹¹⁰⁶

Thus, compelling paupers and criminals to work would be to emancipate them, namely, from themselves. Indeed, this opened up the possibility that such individuals would at some point attain to self-mastery, and thus true freedom. For instance, in an article published a few months after *Past and Present*, Carlyle described how the dictator of Paraguay, Dr. Francia, had threatened a dishonest belt-maker with the 'Workman's Gallows':

[the belt maker] worked there with such an alacrity and sibylline enthusiasm, all night, that his belts on the morrow were without parallel in South America; - and he is now, if still in life, Beltmaker-general to Paraguay, a prosperous man; grateful to Francia and the gallows, we may hope, for casting certain of the Seven Devils out of him!¹¹⁰⁷

Thus, for Carlyle, an authoritarian 'Organisation of Labour' would provide a framework in which every individual would be compelled to 'stand on [his] own feet by [his] own industrious toil', and thus live a moral, dignified, and independent life. In this sense, for Carlyle, the 'Organisation of Labour' would serve as a means to collective independence, and moral regeneration.¹¹⁰⁸

DEMOCRACY AND SOVEREIGNTY IN *PAST AND PRESENT* (1843)

Having examined Carlyle's concept of the 'Organisation of Labour', it is now necessary to explore some of his arguments regarding authority more generally. Indeed, this will further corroborate the argument made above, to the effect that a top-down 'Organisation of Labour' was intended primarily for the benefit of those subject to it. As noted in the previous chapter, Carlyle's criticisms of the shortcomings of democracy in *Past and Present* were significantly indebted to those of Plato, as expressed in the *Republic*. Here, Plato had used the analogy of the 'ship-of-state', arguing that the 'true ship's captains' were philosophers, i.e., those who saw into the laws of nature, and who were

¹¹⁰⁶*Past and Present*, 204-205, 210-211. My italics.

¹¹⁰⁷'Dr Francia' [1843], *CME* VII:49.

¹¹⁰⁸To suggest, as Rob Breton recently has, that Carlyle was 'defending low wages by affirming that that work's reward is intrinsic', is to entirely miss the point (*Gospels and Grit: Work and Labour in Carlyle, Conrad, and Orwell* [Toronto and Buffalo NY: University of Toronto Press, 2005], 40-42). For Carlyle, material wealth mattered only insofar as it served as a means to moral and spiritual growth. As he asked in *Past and Present*: 'To whom, then, is this wealth of England wealth? Who is it that it blesses; makes happier, wiser, beautifuller, in any way better?' (*PP* 5-6).

thus capable of guiding the state into conformity with them.¹¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Plato argued, 'a ship's captain or commander of this type will not think about or prescribe what is good for the ship's captain, but what is good for the sailor, for the person under his command'.¹¹¹⁰ Fixing 'his view and his gaze on those things which are properly arranged, which are always the same', he would act as the 'craftsman of self-discipline, justice and the whole of popular virtue' in those under his rule.¹¹¹¹ In this sense, the 'best guardians' of the city were those who were 'wise, powerful, and above all devoted to the city', 'utterly determined to do what is in the city's interests, and as refusing to act in any way against its interests'.¹¹¹² Thus, for Plato, authority ought to depend on wisdom, that is, on an insight into the true nature of things, and on virtue, that is on a dedication to the good of the community, and a willingness to guide it into conformity with the laws of nature.

These ideas surfaced repeatedly in *Past and Present*. Here, Carlyle reiterated that democracy was already an accomplished fact, writing that 'men cannot now be bound to men by *brass-collars*', 'Huge Democracy' having 'asserted so much; irrevocably, brooking no reply!'.¹¹¹³ Rather than making a futile attempt to undo 'inevitable Democracy', the task was to find some way of combining it with 'indispensable Sovereignty'.¹¹¹⁴ For Carlyle, this 'Sovereignty' would be that of those 'truly Ἀριστοί, Bravest, Best'.¹¹¹⁵ Indeed, the use of ancient Greek is significant, indicating the classical roots of Carlyle's argument. Moreover, Carlyle also argued that authority should be strictly meritocratic, pointing out the absurdity of allowing a madman, George III, to remain King, while leaving the poet Robert Burns languishing as 'Gauger of ale in Dumfries'.¹¹¹⁶ Carlyle also used the analogy of the 'ship-of-state', writing that, the new aristocracy in place, 'the Heaven's Loadstar once clearly in our eye, how will each true man stand truly to *his* work in the ship; how, with undying hope, will all things be fronted, all be conquered'.¹¹¹⁷ Thus, Carlyle, like Plato, believed in an aristocracy of virtue and wisdom, ruling for the common good, rather than a self-serving despotism.

Past and Present also reiterated the proposals that Carlyle had made in 'Chartism' regarding education. In doing so, it reproduced the tension between authority and emancipation that characterised his thought regarding the 'Organisation of Labour'. As Carlyle recognised, it was only

¹¹⁰⁹Plato, *The Republic*, trans. T. Griffiths (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 191-192.

¹¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 19-21.

¹¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 204-205.

¹¹¹²*Ibid.*, 105-106.

¹¹¹³*Past and Present*, 241.

¹¹¹⁴*Past and Present*, 241.

¹¹¹⁵*Past and Present*, 205. The use of ancient Greek is significant, indicating that Carlyle's argument was rooted in the political philosophy, and particularly the aristocratic republicanism, of the ancient world.

¹¹¹⁶*Past and Present*, 84.

¹¹¹⁷*Past and Present*, 36.

in a 'whole world of Heroes' that 'a Hero-King *can* reign'.¹¹¹⁸ As in 'Chartism', he thus called for a system of national education, which would not only serve to inculcate a spirit of reverence for authority, but also render the people fit to participate in political life themselves. As Carlyle put it, 'a right Education Bill' was the only means by which 'thought, reflection, articulate utterance and understanding be awakened in these individual million heads', there being 'no other way of illuminating any Chaos!'.¹¹¹⁹ Thus, Carlyle seems to have left the door open to some kind of popular participation in politics, pending the education of the people. Moreover, he seems to have envisaged an advisory role for Parliaments. In *Cromwell* (1845), Carlyle outlined the establishment of the so-called 'Little' (or 'Barebones') Parliament. The function of the latter was to advise Cromwell, the 'Captain General', and, while its members were not elected in any democratic sense, they were appointed on a meritocratic basis, following consultation with the local clergy, and 'much earnest revision, and solemn consideration in all kinds'.¹¹²⁰ Thus, Carlyle looked forward to a new 'organic' era, and new forms of aristocratic authority.

GENERAL RESPONSE TO *PAST AND PRESENT*

Readers of *Past and Present* were quick to recognise that the thrust of Carlyle's argument was in the direction of new forms of co-operative labour. One particularly interesting instance occurred in the pages of the *North of England Magazine* in August 1843. Here, a correspondent sought to improve upon Carlyle's proposals for an 'Organisation of Labour', and, in particular, a system of profit-sharing. At the beginning of his letter, the correspondent remarked that 'the population of Manchester' was 'equal to that of Sparta in her prime', while the size of Liverpool was not much different to that of 'the still more celebrated community of Athens'. However, according to the author, these 'ancient states' had achieved a 'minute organization of society', in comparison to which that of modern Britain seemed 'simple, even rude'.¹¹²¹ Continuing, the author noted:

Mr. Thomas Carlyle, in the most directly practical part of his recent work, "The Past and the Present," [sic] has pointed out as one great defect in our present state, *the want of permanent relations* between employers and employed... Mr. Carlyle asks, whether there is no mode whereby the workpeople might have some permanent proportionable interest in the success

¹¹¹⁸*Past and Present*, 34.

¹¹¹⁹*Past and Present*, 255.

¹¹²⁰*Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches: With Elucidations* [1845], original three volumes reprinted in one (London: Ward Lock & Co. Ltd, n.d.), 486-488. See also 510-512, 587.

¹¹²¹'The Organization of Society in Large Towns' (anonymous letter to the editor), in *The North of England Magazine and Bradshaw's Journal*, XIX (Aug. 1843), 161-167 (161-162).

of each concern.

The author then set out some of the probable consequences of 'lengthened contracts for the leasing out of labour'. In doing so, he emphasised that a more reliable income would serve as a means to the moral improvement of the labouring classes, as well as to the strengthening of social ties beyond the workplace. As he explained:

If a workman had leased out his services for seven years to come, he might, without imprudence, take the lease of a house for some years, and would obtain better accommodation. He would, moreover, become willing to spend his labour or his money in improving his habitation, and would even take a permanent interest in his street. Neighbours would be more known to each other, and local reputation would create many valuable ties... such a system makes the workman more respectable; and the more likely he is to learn self-control and steadiness.

Moreover, the author emphasised that such an arrangement would be beneficial to employers, explaining that a 'master' would 'have the comfort of being able to count, for years to come, on the steady services of a tried band'. However, the author then argued that there would be need for some kind of 'tribunal', composed 'in part of masters and foremen', and 'in part of fellow workmen', which would 'sit in judgement on the misconduct of a workman who had leased out his labour', but failed to do his work. Given that labourers themselves had 'generally a hearty disposition to work hard themselves, and a strong conscientious disapproval of a man who takes the wages of labour and defrauds him who pays them', the author had no doubt that 'an honest jury might be thus formed, whose decisions would have full moral weight with the community'.¹¹²² What is interesting here is the letter's congruence with Carlyle's arguments, to the effect that the 'Organisation of Labour' would be valuable not so much in securing higher wages, as in transforming the workplace into an ethical community, favourable to the moral development of individual workers.

As noted above, Carlyle had argued in *Past and Present* that education might serve as a means to reconcile 'inevitable Democracy' with 'indispensable Sovereignty', particularly by fostering a sense of reverence towards virtue and wisdom. As one reviewer clearly recognised:

¹¹²²'The Organization of Society in Large Towns' (anonymous letter to the editor), in *The North of England Magazine and Bradshaw's Journal*, XIX (Aug. 1843), 161-167 (165-166).

His general doctrine in respect of cure we take to be this, - that while monarchy is indispensable to the regulation of the other elements of society, these elements will become essentially democratic; for, that to this result the tendency is strong, the progress irresistible. However, to reconcile these opposite or separate interests and influences, an enlightened, honest, and sound-hearted government must interpose and be at the helm; while a no less important institution must exist in the shape of an effective teaching class; its duties and functions being to infuse a new and proper spirit into the nation.¹¹²³

Similarly, another reviewer noted that 'what are called the popular tendencies in Europe, or England in particular, are no cause for alarm in the mind of Mr. Carlyle', provided they be tempered by a system of moral education:

Were every man to be instructed not only to the extent of reading, but to a capacity of forming some intelligible opinion upon moral and political questions, it would endanger no laws and institutions founded in justice and equity. No *righteous* ruler, lawgiver, judge, or spiritual guide whatever, need fear the scrutiny of such a nation of free, intelligent men. Ignorance is a protection only to injustice and wrong. Let the governors spiritual and temporal be wiser and better than the governed, and the more elevated the people, the more safety and glory to the governors.¹¹²⁴

As the reviewer made clear, the authority envisaged by Carlyle could hardly be considered to be oppressive. First, being wise and virtuous, it acted in the best interests of all those subject to it. Second, these subjects, having received a sound education, understood this to be the case, and thus freely chose to yield their obedience. Of course, the idea that 'governors' ought to be 'wiser and better than the governed' was a commonplace of a long-standing aristocratic republican tradition, stretching back to Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, the *Times* made explicit Carlyle's debts to Plato in this regard, writing:

The greatest of heathen philosophers has recorded his belief that the world would never be well governed till either Kings became philosophers, or philosophers Kings. Mr. Carlyle has improved upon the sentiment, and has in a former work laid it down as a matter of positive certainty that the age is approaching in which this great desideratum will be realized. He has

1123 'Carlyle's Past and Present', in *Monthly Review*, 2 (June 1843), 190-203 (192).

1124 'Carlyle's Past and Present', in *New Englander and Yale Review*, 2 (Jan. 1844), 25-39 (33).

even gone further, and, not content with the triumph of *philosophy* (written or unwritten) over mere unintellectual monarchies, has appropriated the prediction in favour of book-writers – amongst whom he himself is not to be forgotten.¹¹²⁵

As noted in the above discussion of *Past and Present*, Carlyle had propounded a radical meritocracy, in which the only titles to authority would be virtue and wisdom. Furthermore, in illustrating this point, Carlyle had deplored the fact that George III, a madman, had been entrusted with the governance of the nation, while the poet Robert Burns had languished as an excise-man, gauging ale at Dumfries. One reviewer, writing in the *Athenæum*, took particular exception to this idea, asking: 'Does the author intend that every George III. is to be deposed as often as we discover any man who can write nervous poetry to enthrone in his place?'. 'This', the reviewer then added, 'is worse than the St. Simonian "Every man according to his capacity"'.¹¹²⁶

Following the publication of *Cromwell* in 1845, several other reviewers also drew attention to the classical roots of Carlyle's beliefs regarding the authority.¹¹²⁷ For instance, one reviewer, writing in the *British Quarterly Review*, praised *Cromwell* for having recognised that the fate of the nation ought not to be decided by 'mere numbers', but rather 'by the comparative strength of principles in these lands – by the amount of mind, energy, and self-sacrifice which principles have been found to rally about them'.¹¹²⁸ Another commentator, writing in the *Yale Review*, drew the classical distinction between a vulgar despot, ruling in his own interest, and a dictator, who governed for the good of the state as a whole. According to the reviewer, Carlyle had conclusively demonstrated that *Cromwell* was not a despot, but rather the best kind of dictator, occupying 'a position which he might say with truth he held for his country's good. Forsake it he could not'.¹¹²⁹ Indeed, a similar point was made by a reviewer writing somewhat later in the *Times*. According to this reviewer, the real despot had been

¹¹²⁵Review of 'Past and Present', in *The Times* (6th Oct. 1843), 3.

¹¹²⁶'Past and Present. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The Athenæum*, no. 812 (20th May 1843), 480-481 (481).

¹¹²⁷According to Blair Worden, Carlyle bore the imprint of 'the devout Calvinism in which he was brought up', and the 'enduring achievement of Carlyle's book' was 'his recovery of the thread of religious conviction that ran through *Cromwell's* life'. Moreover, according to Worden, Carlyle's 'deeper quarrel' was 'with the Whig and republican tradition', which had 'stripped the civil wars of Puritanism and presented them as a struggle for civil liberty', presenting 'Cromwell as the fatal betrayer not merely of the Roundhead cause but of all virtue and fidelity' (*Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* [London: Penguin, 2002], 266-269). However, as has been argued in previous chapters, Carlyle's debts to 'Calvinism' have been greatly exaggerated, and, whatever his admiration for seventeenth-century 'Puritanism', he believed it to have been outstripped by the rise of industry. Furthermore, Worden seems to be working on the assumption that 'republicanism' was necessarily popular or democratic, whereas, in fact, it could also be elitist or aristocratic, as was the case with Carlyle. It is thus important not to overstate the importance of 'Puritanism', and to examine some of the classical, aristocratic republican themes of Carlyle's book.

¹¹²⁸'Cromwell's Letters, Etc. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The British Quarterly Review*, 3 (1st Feb. 1846), 50-95 (89-94).

¹¹²⁹'Cromwell', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXI (Apr. 1847), 393-423 (421-422).

the Long Parliament, 'arrogant, factious, corrupt, tyrannical, chimerical, utterly incompetent to govern', but nonetheless preparing to 'vote itself perpetual'. In this situation, Cromwell acted to 'save the nation', assuming a temporary dictatorship, for the good of the community as a whole. However, while 'Cromwell was compelled to be a dictator', 'he abhorred the thought of being a despot', and thus summoned the Little Parliament, 'an incomparably more respectable, enlightened, and public-spirited assembly'.¹¹³⁰ In sum, reviewers of Cromwell made a distinction between, on the one hand, a vulgar despot (whether an individual or a parliament), who governed for his own benefit, and, on the other, a wise and virtuous dictator, who ruled for the good of the community. For such reviewers, it was clear that Carlyle advocated the latter, not the former.

AN OWENITE ON *PAST AND PRESENT*: CHARLES BRAY

In 1844, one year after the appearance of *Past and Present*, Charles Bray, a Coventry-based Owenite, published a work entitled *An Essay Upon the Union of Agriculture and Manufactures, and Upon the Organization of Industry*. Here, Bray reiterated Robert Owen's proposals to resettle urban workers on the land. In particular, Bray called for the creation of model communities, in which the labour of workers would be dedicated first and foremost to 'husbandry', thus securing 'all the first necessities of life', with only '*surplus labour*' available to 'manufactures', and the production of '*superfluities*'.¹¹³¹ According to Bray, once the labourer was able to furnish himself with 'the first necessities of life', he would no longer be 'dependent upon wages alone', and would 'have something to fall back upon during the fluctuations to which our trade is, and always must be, liable'.¹¹³² Indeed, Bray seems to have valued the 'Organization of Industry' primarily as a means to collective independence from such fluctuations of trade. As he explained, quoting Carlyle's *Past and Present*:

We talk of liberty, while the multitudes are slaves to work and want; we must give up such liberty, which means chance, that we may propose the only real liberty dependent upon law. Each man as he comes into the world must be shown his place and his work, and not left to find it, or starve. "All human interests, combined human endeavours, and social growths in this world, have at a certain stage of their development, required organizing; and Work, the grandest of human interests, does now require it."¹¹³³

¹¹³⁰Carlyle's Cromwell and Guizot's English Republic and Cromwell', in *The Times* (4th Jan. 1855), 5.

¹¹³¹Charles Bray, *An Essay Upon the Union of Agriculture and Manufactures, and Upon the Organization of Industry* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844), 52-56.

¹¹³²Bray, *Essay*, 78-82.

¹¹³³Bray, *Essay*, 101-105.

Thus, for Bray, as for Carlyle, top-down, authoritarian intervention in economic life would be far from oppressive, but rather, at least from the perspective of the working-classes, emancipatory. Later in the book, Bray cited from *Past and Present* again, laying particular emphasis on the military analogy, which, as we have seen, Carlyle had taken from the Saint-Simonians. Citing *Past and Present*, Bray wrote:

The solution we think will not be difficult when the country is convinced that Labour, to give it a soul and intelligence, must be organized. With the example of the Army and the Post Office before us, we need not despair or think it *impossible*, if difficult, that an Army of Industry should be enlisted, drilled, and made to march against all impediments in the way of physical and moral well-being, however low in the social scale such a soldier may be originally found. Suppose as a first step we should have real workhouses in each district... under the direction of a central board and proper officers... Government might enlist parties for such Industrial establishments, as they do now soldiers for the army, taking care that the capabilities of each person enlisted should be quite equal to producing more than he consumed. When enlisted, each person would of course be expected, like our soldiers, to give up his liberty for a certain term of years, and to be at the complete disposal of the Government... Such an army, *well officered*, would be invincible against want and misery, and vice and immorality - "No working world, any more than a fighting world, can be led on without a noble Chivalry of Work, and laws and fixed rules which follow put of that, - far nobler than any mere chivalry of fighting was".

In his preface, Bray had explained that the *Essay* had also been published in the form of an introduction to another work, entitled *An Outline of the various Social Systems and Communities which have been founded on the principle of Co-operation* (1844). This contained a long account of Saint-Simonism, including the idea of a quasi-military 'Organisation of Labour', and, for this reason, Bray would have been well-aware of the provenance of Carlyle's analogy.¹¹³⁴ At the very end of the *Essay*, Bray once again cited *Past and Present*. Moreover, he also suggested that the purpose of the 'Organisation of Labour' was not to raise wages, but rather to provide a social framework favourable to the moral growth and development of individuals. Bray wrote:

¹¹³⁴Mary Hennell, *An Outline of the Various Social Systems & Communities Which Have Been Founded on the Principle of Co-operation. With an Introductory Essay by the Author of "The Philosophy of Necessity"* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844), 99-121.

Under the existing system there seems to be little reason to hope that the great mass of the people can be raised much above their present state of animalism, in which the whole of life is spent in struggling for the means of living; in which the nobler faculties of the soul lie for ever dormant and undeveloped, and the unbalanced propensities extinguish all healthy action of the moral feelings... Those who see in man higher and nobler powers and aspirations, which await more genial circumstances for their development, cannot but regard the plans of the Social Reformers, and the new state of society they would introduce, with *interest* and with *hope*; others go still further, and affirm, with T. Carlyle, that “This that they call “Organization of Labour,” is, if well understood, the problem of the whole future, for all who would in future pretend to govern men”.¹¹³⁵

In sum, Bray, drawing heavily on Carlyle, and particularly *Past and Present*, argued that the 'Organisation of Labour' would liberate labourers from their dependence on fluctuating market forces, and, in resettling them on the land, enable them to earn the 'first necessities' of life. However, beyond these 'first necessities', Bray seemed less interested in material abundance, than in the moral development of individuals. In this sense, an authoritarian 'Organisation of Labour', conducted on quasi-military lines, would, for the working-classes, prove emancipatory, guaranteeing collective independence from market forces, and providing those conditions and circumstances necessary to moral integrity and autonomy.

CHARTISTS ON *PAST AND PRESENT*

In addition to Owenites such as Bray, *Past and Present* also found a favourable response amongst the Chartists. As Margot Finn has noted, the Chartist movement broke new ground in the mid-1840s, distancing itself from an older radical tradition, which emphasised the importance of political representation and electoral reform, and moving towards 'new theories of collective social and economic identity'.¹¹³⁶ As Finn points out, one manifestation of this shift in emphasis was a mounting interest in the 'Organisation of Labour'. However, Finn does not mention the important role that Carlyle, and particularly *Past and Present*, played in this process. For instance, early in 1847, the *People's Journal*, which numbered the Chartist W. J. Linton amongst its contributors, declared that 'industrial re-organisation' was 'the problem of the present time', having 'perplexed our greatest thinkers, from Carlyle downwards'. According to the author, one potential solution lay in

¹¹³⁵Bray, *Essay*, 107-114.

¹¹³⁶Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 57-59.

co-operation, which would enable better-paid labourers to work together 'as a collective body', and thus 'raise themselves to independence'.¹¹³⁷ Later the same year, the journal again returned to the theme, in the course of a comparison between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Carlyle. According to the journal, Emerson had succeeded in laying bare the 'distempers' of the age, but offered no guidance as to what 'to DO'. In contrast, Carlyle had gone some way towards embracing a 'healthy, social philosophy'. In particular, the journal added, Carlyle, 'when he talks of "Captains of Industry", "Organised Labour", the "Union of Capital and Work", seems to discern dimly the great Constructive Truth of the Nineteenth Century'. For this reason, he was entitled to more respect than 'Mr. Emerson', who had, in the meantime, 'fled to the mountain-tops, to please himself with the study of pine-cones and humble bees'.¹¹³⁸ Another example of increased Chartist interest in Carlyle is provided by an article entitled, 'The Chartist Land Scheme', which appeared in the *Northern Star* in January 1848. This reproduced the *Newcastle Advertiser's* account of a recent lecture, delivered in Newcastle, by Samuel Kydd, a leader of the Chartist movement. Here, Kydd had sought to promote the 'Chartist Co-operative Land Company', which aimed to purchase land. and then settle Chartist workers upon it. In the course of his speech, Kydd declared:

Thomas Carlyle hath quaintly said, that life was a constant repetition of the active verb "to do." There was a volume in the sentence; and it seemed to be a suicidal national policy to allow one man, able and willing to labour, to remain idle, from a want of employment... Yet we had millions of men idle and starving, and millions of acres of land profitable, if cultivated.¹¹³⁹

It is significant that in all three of the cases cited above, Carlyle's name was cited in support of co-operative labour. Indeed, as we shall see, this convergence between Carlyle, Chartists, and co-operators would become more and more direct, particularly following the outbreak of the February Revolution in France. However, before moving on to this subject, it is necessary to first examine John Stuart Mill's response to *Past and Present*. Here, as was the case with the Owenite and Chartist reviewers mentioned above, the discussion hinged upon the question of co-operative labour.

1137'The Week, Ending Saturday, January 23rd, 1847: The New Co-Operative Societies', in *The People's Journal – Annals of Progress*, Vol. III (n.d. [c. Jan. / Feb. 1847]), 7-8.

1138Review of Emerson's 'Letters from America', in *The People's Journal*, Vol. IV, no. 93 (9th Oct. 1847), 307-308.

1139'The Chartist Land Scheme' (reprinted from the *Newcastle Advertiser*), in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (8th Jan. 1848), 7.

JOHN STUART MILL AND 'THE CLAIMS OF LABOUR'

In a letter written in December 1844, the economist Nassau Senior suggested that John Stuart Mill was not altogether to be trusted, having 'been bitten by Carlyle'.¹¹⁴⁰ This was evident in an essay entitled 'Claims of Labour', which Mill published several months later, in April 1845. Ostensibly a review of a work by Arthur Helps, in which the latter repeatedly cited Carlyle, and called upon the 'Captains of Industry' to take responsibility for their 'dependents', the article also furnished Mill with an opportunity to respond to some of the points made by Carlyle in *Past and Present*.¹¹⁴¹ In his introduction, Mill stated that the 'Claims of Labour have become the question of the day'.¹¹⁴² He attributed this to a number of factors, including the recent writings of Carlyle. According to Mill, these constituted 'an indignant remonstrance with the higher classes on their sins of omission against the lower', by means of a contrast with what Carlyle 'deemed the superior efficiency, in that relation, of the rulers in older times'.¹¹⁴³ Mill expressed considerable sympathy with Carlyle, declaring:

We yield to no one in our wish that "cash payment" should be no longer "the universal *nexus* between man and man;" that the employers and employed should have the feelings of friendly allies, not of hostile rivals whose gain is each other's loss.¹¹⁴⁴

However, while Mill agreed 'so far, with the new doctrines', he challenged Carlyle's use of 'Feudality' as a model for the industrialism of the future.¹¹⁴⁵ For one thing, this risked playing into the hand of those who would set the clock back to the middle ages, reducing the poor to a state of blind submission and obedience. As Mill put it:

[Carlyle] has met with auxiliaries from a directly opposite point of the political horizon; from those whom a spirit of reaction against the democratic tendencies of this age, had flung

1140 Nassau Senior to Macvey Napier, 18th Dec. 1844, in *Selection from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), 480.

1141 See Arthur Helps, *The Claims of Labour: An Essay on the Duties of the Employers to the Employed* [1844], 2nd ed. (London: William Pickering, 1845), v-vi, 34-35, 61-62, 111. As Helps' biographer, Stephen L. Keck, has recently pointed out, Mill did not quite do justice to the subtleties of Helps' argument, particularly his emphasis on the education of the poor, which served to qualify his paternalism. See Keck, *Sir Arthur Helps and the Making of Victorianism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 54-57.

1142 'The Claims of Labour' [Apr. 1845], reprinted in *Dissertations and Discourses* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1867), II:182.

1143 'The Claims of Labour', 190-191.

1144 'The Claims of Labour', 204-206.

1145 'The Claims of Labour', 204-206.

off with the greatest violence in the direction of feudal and sacerdotal ascendancy.¹¹⁴⁶

This was a probable reference to the 'Young England' movement, which had recently been founded by a splinter group of Tory aristocrats. In brief, 'Young England' supported the idea of a *noblesse oblige*, arguing that the landed aristocracy and established church ought to undertake philanthropic enterprises on behalf of the poor. In doing so, they at times quoted selectively from Carlyle, using certain passages of his writings to justify their vision of an agrarian, feudal society.¹¹⁴⁷ However, as we have seen in a previous chapter, Carlyle had little sympathy with 'Young England'. While Carlyle had, in *Past and Present*, suggested that some of the *principles* of the middle ages, as the most recent 'organic' era, might offer guidelines for the organic industrialism of the future, he had made abundantly clear that he had no desire to set the clock back to feudalism. In Carlyle's opinion, 'Young England' was thus engaged in a futile attempt to turn back the tide of progress, and to restore traditional institutions, which had long since fallen into decrepitude and obsolescence.¹¹⁴⁸ For instance, early in 1844, Carlyle had written:

On the whole, *if* Young England would... honestly recognising what was dead, and leaving the dead to bury that, address itself frankly to the magnificent but as yet chaotic and appalling Future, in the *spirit* of the Past and Present; telling men at every turn that it knew and saw forever clearly the *body* of the Past to be dead (and even to be damnable if it pretended still to be alive, and go about in a galvanic State), - what achievements might not Young England perhaps manage for us!¹¹⁴⁹

Thus, it is important to recognise that Mill's article was not an attack on Carlyle per se, but rather on those who were seeking to appropriate his ideas from 'a directly opposite point of the political horizon'.¹¹⁵⁰ While Mill thus raised doubts concerning the propriety of Carlyle's feudal analogy, fearing that this might play into the hands of conservatives and reactionaries, he substantially

1146'The Claims of Labour', 190-191.

1147For instance, in 1840, a Tory reviewer of Carlyle's essay 'Chartism' had written: 'Stop the gambling speculation of our manufactures, and drain off the surplus population from our towns into the country... Restore something of the feudal spirit into our tenure of land... a landlord in every part of the empire, exercising faithfully, and earnestly, and affectionately, the duties of a little monarch, and so carrying into the minutest details, from day to day, the principles of a paternal government... Then give to every landlord the best of coadjutors, appointed for him by God, a good religious clergyman... These are the only cures for our evils, and only answer to Mr. Carlyle's question on the condition of England' ('Carlyle's Works', in *The Quarterly Review*, 46 [June-Sep. 1840], 446-503 [501-502]).

1148This point is well made by Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 99-100.

1149TC to Richard Monckton Milnes, 17th Mar. 1844, *CL* 17:312.

1150C.f. Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 47-49, and Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism*, 42-43, both of whom interpret Mill's article as an attack on Carlyle himself. Giorgio Lanaro goes even further, describing it as 'il testo che segnò la sua rottura pubblica con Carlyle' (*L' "Utopia Praticabile": John Stuart Mill e la scuola sansimoniana* [Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2003], 88-89).

agreed with Carlyle's other proposals, most notably education, and cooperative enterprise.¹¹⁵¹ Regarding the former, Mill called for the establishment of 'schools of industry', in which 'the children of the poor should learn to use not only their hands, but their minds, for the guidance of their hands'.¹¹⁵² With regard to the latter, Mill advocated 'raising the labourer from a receiver of hire' to 'the position of being, in some sort, a partner'. According to Mill, this constituted

the only, or the most practicable, means of harmonizing the "rights of industry" and those of property; of making the employers the real chiefs of the people, leading and guiding them in a work in which they also are interested - a work of co-operation, not of mere hiring and service; and justifying, by the superior capacity in which they contribute to the work, the higher remuneration which they receive for their share of it.¹¹⁵³

Thus, while Mill might have rejected Carlyle's feudal analogy, he agreed with him in looking beyond *laissez-faire*, and towards the establishment of new forms of co-operative labour, particularly profit-sharing. Moreover, as the above quotation demonstrates, Mill had no objection to 'employers' becoming 'chiefs of the people', provided their authority was founded on 'superior capacity', and a willingness to 'lead and guide' not only for their own good, but also for that of their employees. In sum, regarding co-operation, 'Organisation of Labour', and the 'Captains of Industry', the positions of Mill and Carlyle were, at this point, in fact highly similar, if not almost identical.

In the first edition of his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), Mill returned to many of these themes. In an implicit reference to Carlyle's *Past and Present*, he distinguished between 'the theory of dependence' and the theory 'of self-dependence':

According to the former theory, the lot of the poor... should be regulated *for* them, not *by* them... It is the duty of the higher classes to think for them, and to take the responsibility of their lot, as the commander and officers of an army take that of the soldiers composing it... This is the ideal of the future, in the minds of those whose dissatisfaction with the Present assumes the form of affection and regret towards the Past.¹¹⁵⁴

There were considerable elements of caricature in this portrayal, Carlyle having asserted the

¹¹⁵¹As Morrow points out, Carlyle valued 'self-directed action', and thus 'had more in common with the perspective of John Stuart Mill than that of conventional Tory paternalism' (*Thomas Carlyle*, 99-100).

¹¹⁵²'The Claims of Labour', 199-200, 203-204.

¹¹⁵³'The Claims of Labour', 210-211, see also 214-215.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Principles of Political Economy* (London: John W. Parker, 1848), II:314-315.

inevitability of democracy, and, moreover, the pressing necessity of universal education, in order to enable the people to make informed, intelligent decisions regarding public affairs. However, despite such caricaturing of Carlyle, Mill then reiterated his support for the 'Organisation of Labour', including the collaboration of employers and employees, writing:

The value of this 'organization of industry' for healing the widening and embittering feud between the class of labourers and the class of capitalists, must, I think, impress itself by degrees on all who habitually reflect on the condition and tendencies of modern society.¹¹⁵⁵

Thus, despite certain exaggerations, caricatures, and rhetorical sleights of hand (most likely intended to make himself seem more original), Mill ultimately endorsed Carlyle's vision of co-operation, 'Organisation of Labour', and the leading role of 'Captains of Industry'. Indeed, as we shall see in a subsequent section, this would remain the case, even in Mill's later texts of the 1860s and 1870s.

'TRUE SOCIALISM': CARLYLE AND THE 'ORGANISATION OF LABOUR' DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY YEARS (1848-1850)

Following the outbreak of the February Revolution in 1848, Carlyle continued to develop his ideas regarding the 'Organisation of Labour'. In doing so, he brought together Saint-Simonian socialism and aristocratic republicanism, setting out a vision of an industrial, aristocratic republic.¹¹⁵⁶ In an article published in the *Revue Indépendante* in 1846, Joseph Antoine Milsand had asserted that 'Mr. Carlyle walks side by side with Mr. Pierre Leroux and Mr. Louis Blanc', all three seeking to 'organise the revolution'.¹¹⁵⁷ In this sense, according to Milsand, Carlyle, 'more than any other' British thinker, had embraced the cause of 'true socialism'.¹¹⁵⁸ This no doubt owed much to the fact that Carlyle, Leroux, and Blanc were similarly indebted to the Saint-Simonian vision of an 'Organisation of Labour'. As several historians have noted, Blanc's achievement had been to fuse the Saint-Simonian concept with the Jacobin tradition, setting out a vision of co-operative workshops,

1155'On the Probable Futurity of the Labouring Classes', 332.

1156C.f. Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, ch. 6, 'Latter-Day Pamphleteer', which does not discuss the 'Organisation of Labour' in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and other texts of this period.

1157'Antoine Dilmans' [Joseph Antoine Milsand], 'Thomas Carlyle', in *La Revue Indépendante* (25th Sep. 1846), 141-142. A similar point is made by Emile Montéguet, 'Thomas Carlyle. Sa vie et ses écrits', in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15th Apr. 1849), 308-309. Pierre Leroux had been a leader of the Saint-Simonian society during the late 1820s and early 1830s.

1158Milsand, 'Thomas Carlyle', 147-148.

presided over by democratically elected managers, and sponsored by a universal suffrage republic.¹¹⁵⁹ Following the overthrow of King Louis-Philippe in February 1848, Blanc became a member of the provisional French government, and immediately set about putting his theories regarding the 'Organisation of Labour' into practice. Unsurprisingly, Carlyle followed these efforts with great interest. For instance, in a manuscript written early in March, he expressed his hope that to 'settle the labour question, can at least be attempted in peace, with a practical spirit'.¹¹⁶⁰ Later the same month, Carlyle informed a correspondent that 'this of the "organisation of labour" is precisely the question of questions for all governments whatsoever', adding that 'it vitally behoved the poor French Provisional to attempt a solution'.¹¹⁶¹ John Stuart Mill was no less enthusiastic, suggesting on the 13th May in the *Examiner* that Carlyle ought to pay closer attention to the 'the working men and women now in conference with Louis Blanc' at the Luxembourg Palace.¹¹⁶² However, in an article published the same day in the *Spectator*, Carlyle had acknowledged that the 'huge business called "Organisation of Labour" was 'of infinite concernment and of vital necessity to all of us'.¹¹⁶³ Indeed, it is important to note that Carlyle and Mill were in a minority regarding their support for the endeavours of Louis Blanc and his colleagues. As Fausto Proietti has recently demonstrated, the response to Blanc and his proposals in Britain, at least among the mainstream periodical press, was largely hostile. For instance, on 22nd August 1848, the *Times* declared that 'Socialism means massacre, devastation, and universal pillage', adding two weeks later: 'That Paris is in a state of siege and ruin is to be set down to the account of Louis Blanc and his ateliers'.¹¹⁶⁴

Blanc's efforts were short-lived, however, and he soon found himself forced into exile in Britain. Arriving at Dover on 30th August 1848, Blanc lost no time in penning a response to his French rivals and critics, entitled *Socialisme. Le droit au travail. Réponse à M. Thiers*. This, as Proietti notes, was published in French in September 1848, being translated into English shortly thereafter.¹¹⁶⁵ Having

1159 See, for instance, Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class*, Vol. 1, 'The Age of Artisan Revolution, 1815-1871' (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 70-73, and Gregory Claeys, 'Non-Marxian socialism 1815-1914', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Stedman Jones and Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 544-545.

1160 'Prospects of the French Republic' [probably meant for *Examiner*, 11th Mar. 1848], ed. Goldberg, in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 4 (1983), 19-23. See also TC to William Bridges Adams, 7th Mar. 1848, *CL* 22:264-265, and TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 22nd Mar. 1848, *CL* 22:274.

1161 TC to Thomas Erskine, 24th Mar. 1848, *CL* 22:277-278.

1162 Mill, 'England and Ireland', in *Examiner* (13th May 1848), 307-308. On Mill's interest in the activities of Blanc and the provisional government, see Iris Wessel Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought* (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), 191-215.

1163 'Irish Regiments of the New Era' [*Spectator*, 13th May 1848], reprinted in *Rescued Essays of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Newberry (London: The Leadenhall Press, 1892), 92. See also TC to Alexander J. Scott, 5th Aug. 1848, *CL* 23:86-87.

1164 *The Times* (22nd Aug. 1848, 7th Sep. 1848), cited in Fausto Proietti, *Louis Blanc nel dibattito politico inglese (1848-1852)* (Florence: Centro editoriale toscano, 2009), 16-18.

1165 Proietti, *Louis Blanc*, 19.

heard of Blanc's arrival in Britain, Carlyle actively sought out his company. However, a letter dated January 1849, omitted from the *Collected Letters*, and now preserved at the University of California Santa Cruz, suggests that Carlyle feared to be seen to do so publicly. Carlyle wrote, regarding Blanc:

During the time of the Luxemburg Saturnalia, I read all his Books... I am not permitted to *call* on M. Blanc (I fear), or to testify any formal desire for his acquaintance – unless the gods will please to bestow it upon me gratis perhaps?¹¹⁶⁶

Nonetheless, by 28th March 1849, Carlyle was writing to Blanc directly, informing him:

Many thanks for your interesting little Book... I have read the Pamphlet carefully from beginning to end; in reading all your Books, I have found myself agree completely in your denunciation, or were it even execration and excommunication, of the actual figure of Society... I agree too that in what you call “association,” - which I should prefer to call just *government*, without which human beings never lived, nor I believe can live, - there will be immense advantages, improvements literally without limit.¹¹⁶⁷

Similarly, several days later, Carlyle, in a letter to his wife, referred to 'Louis Blanc's little Book'.¹¹⁶⁸ As noted above, Blanc had published *Socialisme. Le droit au travail. Réponse à M. Thiers* in September 1848, and it was most likely this work to which Carlyle was referring. Indeed, as we shall see, Carlyle would in fact adapt, if not outright plagiarise, a passage of Blanc's 'little Book' in his own *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850).

Before moving on to look at the *Pamphlets* themselves, it is worth pointing out that Carlyle also differed significantly with Blanc regarding the principles upon which the 'Organisation of Labour' should be conducted. In particular, Carlyle rejected Blanc's proposals regarding democratic election, remaining true to the authoritarian vision of the Saint-Simonians. Indeed, in his magnum opus, *L'Organisation du travail* (1839), Blanc had explained the difference between his own system and that of the Saint-Simonians in the following terms:

1166TC to John Robertson, 23rd Jan. 1849, MS 97, Box 5: 294, Strouse Endowment for Thomas Carlyle, University of California Santa Cruz.

1167TC to Louis Blanc, 28th Mar. 1849, *CL* 23:261.

1168TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 4th Apr. 1849, *CL* 24:11-12.

According to the Saint-Simonian doctrine, hierarchy is established essentially *from the top-down* [*par l'élection d'en haut*]. To the contrary, according to our proposals, hierarchy is established essentially *from the bottom-up* [*par l'élection d'en bas*].¹¹⁶⁹

In his initial response to Blanc's writings, Carlyle consistently upheld the position of the Saint-Simonians. For instance, early in 1848, he had written that 'Fraternity, liberty, &c.' was 'not the remedy at all; but true *government* by the wise, true, and noble-minded of the foolish, perverse, and dark, with or *against* their consent'.¹¹⁷⁰ Later the same year, Carlyle informed a correspondent:

I have the firmest conviction that it is possible for even an actual Government (with one brave man in the heart of it), to begin *enlisting* mad perishing mobs of unemployed Paupers into "Industrial Regiments,"... the "Organization of Labour" is an actual inevitability in every country, - and must be taken up not à la Louis Blanc, but in precisely the opposite manner (by military *command* namely, and death-penalty if needful).¹¹⁷¹

Similarly, in April 1849, Carlyle informed Emerson that 'an able-bodied starving beggar is and remains a *Slave* destitute of a *Master*', and, in the 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question' (Dec. 1849), he stated that the first 'right' of any 'poor indolent blockhead' was to be compelled to 'work'.¹¹⁷² In this sense, Carlyle, while agreeing with Blanc on the need for 'Organisation of Labour', differed significantly with him regarding the principles upon which the latter was to be conducted. In doing so, Carlyle essentially remained loyal to the authoritarian vision of the Saint-Simonians.¹¹⁷³

However, Louis Blanc was not the only author on Carlyle's reading list. As Francis Espinasse recalled in his memoirs, it was also around this time that Carlyle read the works of Andrew Fletcher, a noted Scottish republican of the seventeenth century.¹¹⁷⁴ Fletcher had been a strong advocate of

1169Louis Blanc, *Organisation du travail* [1839] 5th ed. (Brussels: Meline, Cans, et Cie., 1848), 156.

1170TC to Thomas Erskine, 24th Mar. 1848, *CL* 22:277-278. See also TC to Thomas Story Spedding, 5 Aug. 1848, *CL* 23:87-88, and TC to Alexander J. Scott, 18th Sep. 1848, *CL* 23:112.

1171TC to J. C. Symons, 28th Nov. 1848, *CL* 23:162-164.

1172TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th Apr. 1849, *CL* 24:30; 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XL (Dec. 1849), 673.

1173Thus, Catherine Heyrendt errs in suggesting that Carlyle owed the idea of an 'Organisation of Labour' to Louis Blanc. Rather, he was already familiar with the concept in its Saint-Simonian form, having, moreover, made extensive use of it in *Past and Present* in 1843. Blanc's writings served merely to sharpen and reinvigorate this pre-existing interest. Catherine Heyrendt, 'Autour d'un inédit de Carlyle sur la Révolution de 1848', in *La France et l'Angleterre au XIXe siècle: Echanges, représentations, comparaisons*, ed. Aprile and Bensimon (Paris: Editions Créaphis, 2006), 532.

1174Espinasse, *Literary Recollections and Sketches*, 178-183. Carlyle later wrote to Charles Gavan Duffy: 'Did you ever read a small octavo volume, almost 150 years old (London, 1703, I think), called "Fletcher of Saltoun's Works"? I recommend it to you for a couple of evenings' (26th Apr. 1851, *CL* 26:71-73).

citizen militias, and had also proposed that vagabonds be subjected to a regime of domestic servitude.¹¹⁷⁵ For instance, in his 'Discourse of Government with relation to Militias' (1698), Fletcher argued that 'mercenaries' had 'no other interest in the commonwealth than their pay'. The 'Romans', 'well knowing such men and liberty to be incompatible', took care to avoid the formation of standing armies, periodically permitting soldiers to return 'to their possessions, trades, or other employments'. By means of an alternative, Fletcher argued that 'the whole free people of any nation ought to be exercised to arms', adding that 'a good militia' would be 'as great a school of virtue as of military discipline'.¹¹⁷⁶ In his 'Two Discourses Concerning the Affairs of Scotland', published the same year, Fletcher turned his attention to the 'numbers of idle vagabonds' with which the country then 'swarmed'. Pointing out that this had never been a problem for 'the ancients', he argued that 'every man of a certain estate in this nation should be obliged to take a proportionable number of those vagabonds', and put them to work on his property. By such means, 'no man might want the necessities of life, nor any person able to work be burdensome to the commonwealth'. Moreover, Fletcher made clear that 'a slave is properly one, who is absolutely subjected to the will of another man without any remedy', whereas those 'subjected under certain limitations, and upon certain accounts necessary for the good of the commonwealth' remained under the rule of law, and thus 'ought to be termed servants'. Not only would such servants be 'under all inducements, encouragements and obligations possible to live quiet, innocent and virtuous lives', but they might also 'hope, if they shew an extraordinary affection, care and fidelity, in the service of their master, that not only they and their families shall have their entire freedom, but a competency to live'.¹¹⁷⁷ In reading the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, it is crucial to bear in mind this distinction between 'slaves' and 'servants'.

In the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle reiterated his opinion that 'the "Organization of Labour" (*not* organizable by the mad methods tried hitherto) is the universal vital Problem of the world'.¹¹⁷⁸ Moreover, he brought together the ideas of the Saint-Simonians, Blanc, and Fletcher, calling for the organisation of 'Industrial Regiments', 'not to fight the French or others', 'but to fight the Bogs and Wildernesses at home and abroad, and to chain the Devils of the Pit'. Carlyle firmly rejected Blanc's

1175A good starting point is John Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the limits of the civic tradition', in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Scottish Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Hont and Ignatieff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. p. 141-151.

1176'A Discourse of Government with relation to Militias' [1698], in *The Political Works of Andrew Fletcher* (London, 1732), 21-23, 32, 43, 47, 50, 53-54, 64.

1177'Two Discourses concerning the Affairs of Scotland' [1698], in *Political Works*, 123-125, 132-133, 138-139, 148, 152-153.

1178'The Present Time' [Feb. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter*, Copyright edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1897), 55.

notions of democratic election, arguing that the only way to drill 'nomadic Banditti of Idleness' into 'Soldiers of Industry' would be strict military discipline, enforced by 'Industrial Colonels, Workmasters, Task-masters, Life-commanders, equitable as Rhadamanthus and inflexible as he'.¹¹⁷⁹ He again made use of the Saint-Simonians' military metaphor, now strongly inflected with Fletcher's stress on republican virtue:

Ragged losels gathered by beat of drum from the overcrowded streets of cities, and drilled a little and dressed in red, do not they stand fire in an uncensurable manner; and handsomely give their life, if needful, at the rate of a shilling per day? Human virtue, if we went down to the roots of it, is not so rare. The materials of human virtue are everywhere abundant as the light of the sun: raw materials,—O woe, and loss, and scandal thrice and threefold, that they so seldom are elaborated, and built into a result!¹¹⁸⁰

Moreover, like Fletcher, Carlyle argued that 'all citizens of the Commonwealth' ought to be 'trained to arms', this being 'the right and the interest of every free man in this world'. However, Carlyle attached particular importance to Fletcher's claim that the 'old Romans made their soldiers work during intervals of war', adding that 'Our War-soldiers' would be '*Industrial*, first of all; doing nobler than Roman works, when fighting is not wanted of them'.¹¹⁸¹ In addition, Carlyle also expanded upon Fletcher's distinction between 'slaves' and 'servants', as well as his claim that 'servants' might 'hope, if they shew an extraordinary affection, care and fidelity, in the service of their master, that not only they and their families shall have their entire freedom, but a competency to live'. According to Carlyle, while paupers were 'of the nature of *slaves*', 'not being able to command [them]selves', and thus in need of 'being *commanded*', it did not follow that they would always be so (here, Carlyle's understanding of freedom as self-mastery once again came into play). He wrote:

Nomadism, I give you notice, has ended; needful permanency, soldier-like obedience, and the opportunity and the necessity of hard steady labour for your living, have begun... He that prefers the glorious 'career of freedom,' let him prove that he can travel there, and be the master of himself... He who has proved that he cannot travel there or be the master of himself, - let him, in the name of all the gods, become a servant, and accept the just rules of servitude!... To each of you I will then say: Here is work for you; strike in to it manlike, soldierlike obedience and heartiness, according to the methods here prescribed, - wages

¹¹⁷⁹'The Present Time', 58-63.

¹¹⁸⁰'Model Prisons' [Mar. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 77.

¹¹⁸¹'The New Downing Street' [Apr. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 139.

follow for you without difficulty; all manner of just remuneration, and at length *emancipation itself follows*.¹¹⁸²

Thus, like Fletcher, like Carlyle believed that 'servitude' might serve as a means to the moral rehabilitation of the 'servant', raising him to the point that he might be trusted to become 'master of himself'. Indeed, this would tally with Carlyle's definition of 'freedom' as self-mastery, as outlined in a previous chapter. At least two (Scottish) reviewers drew attention to Carlyle's debts to Fletcher in this regard. For instance, one commentator noted that Carlyle was not the first to propound such doctrines, 'Fletcher of Saltoun' having, a 'century and a half ago', written 'a treatise to that effect'. He then added: 'probably a more determined republican than Fletcher never stepped in upper leathers'.¹¹⁸³ Similarly, another reviewer also pointed out Carlyle's debts to 'Fletcher of Saltoun', 'whose reputation for patriotism and real goodness of heart, as well as for sternness of manner, was probably as great in his day as Mr. Carlyle's is now'.¹¹⁸⁴

As Quentin Skinner has noted, during the early modern period, the republican concept of liberty, according to which the assembled citizenry *were* the state, had been increasingly displaced by theories which treated the two as separate entities.¹¹⁸⁵ In the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle sought to heal this rift, envisioning the state again becoming identical with the citizenry, the latter now gathered not for war or political deliberation, but for peaceful work. In doing so, Carlyle adapted a passage of Louis Blanc's *Socialisme. Le droit au travail. Réponse à M. Thiers*. Here, Blanc had written:

The State would offer a model; by its side, private Associations, the present economic system, would continue to exist. But such is the force of elasticity which we believe exists in our [State], that in a short time, it is our firm belief, it would expand over the whole society, drawing into its bosom all rival systems by the irresistible attraction of its power.¹¹⁸⁶

In January 1850, Carlyle informed a correspondent that 'the State, in these extraordinary new times' would be called upon to do 'things that in the rear of *it* extend thro' Society altogether'.¹¹⁸⁷ This was

1182'The Present Times', 61, 63. My italics.

1183'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 641-658 (651-652).

1184David Masson, review of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, in *North British Review*, XIV (Nov. 1850), 18-20, 23, 25.

1185Quentin Skinner, 'The State', in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. Ball and Farr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90-131.

1186Louis Blanc, *Le Socialisme. Droit au Travail. Réponse à M. Thiers* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1848), 60-61.

1187TC to Edward Herford, 20th Jan. 1850, CL 25:6-8.

repeated in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle writing:

Suppose the State to have fairly started its "Industrial Regiments of the New Era"... Suppose the announcement were practically made to all British souls that the want of wants, more indispensable than any jewel in the crown, was that of men *able to command men* in ways of industrial and moral well-doing; that the State would give its very life for such men; that such men *were* the State... what a new dawn of everlasting day for all British souls! ¹¹⁸⁸

While Carlyle envisioned the organisation of labour beginning with able-bodied paupers and criminals, he also, like Blanc, saw it eventually extending through the whole of society:

Mill-operatives, all manner of free operatives, as yet unregimented, nomadic under private masters, they, seeing such example and its blessedness, will say: "Masters, you must regiment us a little; make our interests with you permanent a little, instead of temporary and nomadic; we will enlist with the State otherwise!" This will go on, on the one hand, while the State-operation goes on, on the other: thus will all Masters of Workmen, private Captains of Industry, be forced to incessantly co-operate with the State and its public Captains; they regimenting in their way, the State in its way, with ever-widening field; till their fields *meet* (so to speak) and coalesce, and there be no unregimented worker, or such only as are fit to remain unregimented, any more.

According to Carlyle, this would, 'in the course of generations, make us all once more a Governed Commonwealth'.¹¹⁸⁹ In sum, Carlyle here brought together the Saint-Simonian idea of an authoritarian, quasi-military 'Organisation of Labour', Louis Blanc's writings regarding 'association', and Andrew Fletcher's concept of the citizen militia. Whereas in *Past and Present*, Carlyle had emphasised the role of individual Captains of Industry in initiating the 'Organisation of Labour', in the *Pamphlets*, he shifted his emphasis to the State. In doing so, he set out a vision of an industrialist, aristocratic republic.

Following the publication of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle continued to reiterate these ideas. For instance, the following year, in 1851, Carlyle visited Paris, where he met the statesman Adolphe Thiers, one of the targets of Blanc's 'little Book'. In the course of their conversation, Thiers

¹¹⁸⁸'The New Downing Street', 152.

¹¹⁸⁹'The New Downing Street', 153-155.

informed Carlyle of the shortcomings of the attempts that had been made at the 'Organisation of Labour' during the revolution.¹¹⁹⁰ However, this did little to alter Carlyle's opinions, and, shortly after his return to London, he informed a correspondent:

Industry, however, does make progress [in France]; I found my surmise to be... that, on the whole, the CHIEF WORKER was slowly advancing to be King of France too, and wd fling his dirty rabble of stump-orators, statesmen, literators &c &c, one day, into the river out of his road.¹¹⁹¹

Similarly, in the *Life of Sterling* (1851), Carlyle emphasised the importance of 'association, - which will mean discipline, vigorous wise subordination and co-ordination'.¹¹⁹² Thus, even after the failure of French attempts at the 'Organisation of Labour', Carlyle continued to subscribe to the idea. Indeed, as we shall see, it would constitute a mainstay of his writings over the next two decades. However, we must now turn from the 'Organisation of Labour' to Carlyle's pronouncements on political authority more generally. As will be seen, these provide further confirmation for the hypothesis that while Carlyle envisioned the 'Organisation of Labour' on an authoritarian basis, he did so in line with an aristocratic republican tradition, according to which authority, in order to be legitimate, had to govern for the good of those subject to it.

DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITY IN THE *LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS* (1850)

As the subsequent section will make clear, many contemporary reviewers sought to brand the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* an outright rejection of representative government in favour of 'despotism'. However, a close reading suggests that the *Pamphlets*, like Carlyle's earlier writings, would be better understood as an advocacy of an aristocratic republicanism, in which the wisest and most virtuous citizens would be raised to the helm of the state, while still being subject to the rule of law, and some measure of popular control. Arguing that democracy would never be a panacea, Carlyle (as in *Past and Present*) again invoked the arguments of Plato's *Republic*, warning that the 'ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting'.¹¹⁹³ Continuing, Carlyle then cited the precedent of the ancient republics, writing:

¹¹⁹⁰'Excursion to Paris' [1851], in *The Last Words of Thomas Carlyle*, 172-173.

¹¹⁹¹TC to John Childs, 8th Oct. 1851, *CL* 26:198.

¹¹⁹²*The Life of John Sterling* [1851], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 42. See also 'The Opera' [1852], *CME* VII:126.

¹¹⁹³'The Present Time', 40.

Historically speaking, I believe there was no Nation that could subsist upon Democracy. Of ancient Republics, and *Demoi* and *Populi*, we have heard much; but it is now pretty well admitted to be nothing to our purpose; - a universal-suffrage republic, or a general-suffrage one, or any but a most-limited-suffrage one, never came to light, or dreamed of doing so, in ancient times. When the mass of the population were slaves, and the voters intrinsically a kind of *kings*, or men born to rule others; when the voters were *real* 'aristocrats' and manageable dependents of such, - then doubtless voting... might, without immediate destruction... go on.¹¹⁹⁴

Indeed, the character of the ancient republics carried considerable stakes in contemporary politics. For instance, in 1846, the former 'Parliamentary Radical' George Grote had begun to publish his *History of Greece* (1846-1856), in which he praised the Athenian democracy, particularly for its recognition of the sovereignty of the people, and its hatred of oligarchies and kings.¹¹⁹⁵ It is thus tempting to read Carlyle's words as a response to Grote, in which he argued that very different, aristocratic lessons should be learnt from the experience of the ancient republics. Continuing, Carlyle argued that the wise and the virtuous were under a moral obligation to govern, for the good of the community as a whole. As he put it, authority ought to be 'confided to the *Noblest*', the latter accepting the 'divine everlasting duty of directing and controlling the Ignoble', a duty that many would 'fain enough shirk'.¹¹⁹⁶ For Carlyle, the true meaning of 'Democracy' was thus meritocracy, this leading in turn to 'the attainment of a truer and truer Aristocracy, or Government again by the *Best*'.¹¹⁹⁷ In this sense, 'reform-movement', 'electing and electioneering', and 'parliamentary eloquence' were valid not as ends in themselves, but as means to finding 'the ten Ablest Men in England', and making them 'your Governors or Public Officers'.¹¹⁹⁸ As the term 'Public Officers' suggests, these aristocrats would themselves be subject to the rule of law, and some degree of popular accountability. As has been shown in the previous chapter, Carlyle, like the Saint-Simonians, accepted democracy as an accomplished fact. Indeed, the *Pamphlets*, the existence of democracy is assumed, being invoked as a means to prevent aristocracy degenerating into oligarchy. As Carlyle put it:

Of the Continental nuisance called "Bureaucracy," - if this should alarm any reader, - I can

1194'The Present Time', 42. See also 'Chartism', 142-146.

1195See Frank M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1981), ch. 5.

1196'The Present Time', 45-46.

1197'Downing Street' [Apr. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 117-119.

1198'Downing Street', 110.

see no risk or possibility in England. Democracy is hot enough here, fierce enough; it is perennial, universal, clearly invincible among us henceforth.¹¹⁹⁹

As in *Past and Present*, therefore, Carlyle explicitly disavowed a return to the despotism of the past, this having been rendered impossible by the rise of democracy. Moreover, while Carlyle made clear that 'Parliaments' were 'useless or worse' as 'Ruling and Sovereign Bodies', he accepted that they were 'likely to be in future universally useful' as 'Advising Bodies'. As he explained:

Beyond doubt it will be useful, will be indispensable, for the King or Governor to know what the mass of men think upon public questions legislative and administrative; what they will assent to willingly, what unwillingly; what they will resist with superficial discontents and remonstrances, what with obstinate determination, with riot, perhaps with armed rebellion... It is not by rude force, either of muscle or of will, that one man can govern twenty men, much more twenty millions of men. For the moment, if all the twenty are stark against his resolution never so wise, the twenty for the moment must have their foolish way.¹²⁰⁰

While the vision set out in the *Pamphlets* was thus certainly authoritarian, aristocratic, and elitist, it was neither an advocacy of an untrammelled despotism, nor a call for the majority of the population to be reduced to a state of mute obedience and submission. To the contrary, Carlyle explicitly reserved a role to parliamentary 'Advisory Bodies', albeit within a strictly hierarchical framework.¹²⁰¹ Moreover, Carlyle also repeated the calls he had made in 'Chartism' and *Past and Present*, calling for a 'Minister of Education' to train 'young English souls to take command in human Industries, and act a valiant part in under the sun!'.¹²⁰² As with his calls for 'Industrial Regiments', Carlyle thus left the door open to a gradual enlightenment and emancipation of the people, which would eventually enable them to responsibly participate in public affairs. In sum, the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* were not a call for despotism, but rather for a new aristocracy, in which the best citizens would govern for the benefit of the community as a whole. Indeed, such ideas were apparent in Carlyle's later response to the the 'Northcote-Trevelyan Report' (1854), which proposed that appointment to the Civil Service be based solely on merit. For Carlyle, this would be 'worth all

1199'The New Downing Street', 136.

1200'Parliaments' [June 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales*, 194-195, 199, 210, 214.

1201As Morrow puts it, popularly elected assemblies would function as a 'sounding board' (*Thomas Carlyle*, 157). A similar point is made by Fred Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 356-357.

1202'The New Downing Street', 140, 154.

other “reforms” put together’, and the politician responsible, provided that he persisted in the face of opposition from vested interests, would find that ‘all good citizens, all wise men, will rally to him, and he will have begun a new epoch in English History’.¹²⁰³

BACKLASH (1850-1852)

In order to understand Carlyle's meaning in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, it will be necessary to dwell at some length upon their reception amongst various groups of readers. In the following section, it will be argued that the backlash against the *Pamphlets* was bound up with the reaction against recent events in France, particularly the practical attempts that had been made at the ‘Organisation of Labour’. These had stricken a sense of fear into the British middle-classes, to the extent that, to use Margot Finn's phrase, ‘the spectre of communism now haunted hitherto radical middle-class publications’.¹²⁰⁴ Indeed, many reviewers took particular exception to Carlyle's explicit endorsement of the principles of French socialism, arguing that the latter were at best utopian and unrealistic, or, at worst, actively pernicious and destructive. For instance, in April 1850, a contributor to *Eliza Cook's Journal*, a hitherto radical publication, wrote, with reference to the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*:

We are to have “Organization of Labour” under “Captains of Industry.” *How* we are to organize industry differently from what is now practiced, we are furnished with not the least inkling of. St. Simon, Proudhon, Louis Blanc, Fourier, and Robert Owen, put forth their systems; bur Mr. Carlyle has none. He is satisfied with merely repeating their phrase. The Red Republic is more specific than he is... As for his phrase of “Organization of Labour,” we must hold it as a mere Cant-phrase until he tells us what he means.¹²⁰⁵

Two months later, William Edmonstoune Aytoun, writing in the Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, argued that the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* were far from original. ‘France’, he wrote, had already ‘had her Flocons and her Louis Blancs, small, pert, presumptuous animals, chalking out schemes of social regeneration, organised labour, industrial regiments, and the like’.¹²⁰⁶ Later the

¹²⁰³TC to Richard Monckton Milnes, 1st Mar. 1854, *CL* 29:34-35. However, Carlyle worried that the proposed examinations was excessively academic. See ‘Carlyle's Unpublished Comments on the Northcote-Trevelyan Report’, ed. Fielding, in *Carlyle Annual*, 10 (1989) 8-9.

¹²⁰⁴Finn, *After Chartism*, 77-78.

¹²⁰⁵‘Latter Day Pamphlets, No. 1. The Present Time: - By Thomas Carlyle’, in *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 2 (20th Apr. 1850), 398-399 (399).

¹²⁰⁶William Edmonstoune Aytoun, ‘Latter-Day Pamphlets’, in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 641-658 (642).

same year, *Eliza Cook's Journal* again returned to the theme, opining that Carlyle's 'socialism' consisted in mere 'phrases without any plan'.¹²⁰⁷ The following year, in November 1851, the *Times* lamented that 'the only men in the world for whom Mr. Carlyle's heart seems to beat with congenial sympathy' were 'the anarchists of Europe, who destroy everything within their reach, by way of putting everything in order'.¹²⁰⁸ Thus, it seems, Carlyle found himself caught up in the frightened reaction against recent events in France. Indeed, for such critics, Carlyle's open advocacy of the doctrines of French socialism proved unacceptable.

As noted above, the *Times* had insinuated that avowed attempts by the 'anarchists of Europe' to create 'order' were merely a pretext for destruction. Indeed, the same misrepresentation was frequently perpetrated upon Carlyle. For instance, *Eliza Cook's Journal* claimed that 'the revolutionary and destructive genius is stronger in Carlyle than the conservative and constructive',¹²⁰⁹ while the *Palladium* argued that 'he is a destructionist, most efficient in demolishing existing plans and theories; but seldom does he exhibit any which may succeed these – or, when he does, the statement is vague, incoherent, and self-contradictory'.¹²¹⁰ Similarly, the *Times* opined that Carlyle's theories were little more than 'violent and all but unintelligible gibberish'.¹²¹¹ For its part, an American review deplored the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* as 'Utopian, run-mad, outrageous', 'the *ne plus ultra* of political extravaganza',¹²¹² while Edmonstoune Aytoun inquired sarcastically: 'Can any living man point to a single practical passage in any of these volumes?'.¹²¹³ However, while Carlyle's calls for the 'Organisation of Labour' might well have seemed unrealistic and utopian from the political standpoint of such critics, this was very much a matter of opinion. Indeed, as we shall see, other commentators responded far more positively, considering Carlyle's proposals to be both practical and necessary.

In addition to such criticism regarding the 'Organisation of Labour', hostile reviewers also took umbrage at Carlyle's calls for a new aristocracy. In particular, some commentators sought to misrepresent these as yearnings after an unchecked despotism. According to Edmonstoune Aytoun, the 'secret' of 'Mr. Carlyle' was 'Cromwellism', and 'Cromwellism is, we know, but another phrase

1207 'Thomas Carlyle', in *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 3 (12th Oct. 1850), 369-371 (369, 371).

1208 Review of 'Life of Sterling', in *The Times* (1st Nov. 1851), 7.

1209 'Thomas Carlyle', in *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 3 (12th Oct. 1850), 369-371 (369, 371).

1210 'Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *The Palladium* (July 1850), 3-16 (5). In a letter to Tennyson, Edward FitzGerald described Carlyle as 'a great satirist who can make us feel when we are wrong though he cannot set us right'. FitzGerald to Tennyson, 17th Apr. 1850, in *Letters of Edward FitzGerald* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1901), I:259.

1211 Review of 'Life of Sterling', in *The Times* (1st Nov. 1851), 7.

1212 'Thomas Carlyle and his "Latter-Day Pamphlets"', in *Southern Literary Messenger*, 16 (June 1850), 330-340 (332).

1213 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 641-658 (642).

for despotism'.¹²¹⁴ Similarly, according to the *Athenæum*, Carlyle's censures against the ballot-box, if put into practice, would lead only to despotism. Its reviewer remarked:

We all desire to see the wisest in the seat of power. The only real question is – how is the wisest to get into that seat? Two modes have been commonly resorted to: - Scrambling and Election. In the first method, the strong, the crafty, and the unscrupulous have usually won the seat. The other plan, in which the people quietly choose out the man they most approve, Mr. Carlyle denounces as absurd.¹²¹⁵

As has been seen, Carlyle had argued that authority was only valid insofar as it was wielded for the good of those subject to it. In particular, the conscription of criminals and paupers into 'Industrial Regiments', under strict military discipline, was intended to serve as a means to their moral rehabilitation, and reinsertion into the ordinary workforce. However, hostile reviewers tended to portray the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* as a straightforward exercise in sadism and cruelty. For instance, according to the *Palladium*, the proposition that the 'able-bodied pauper' ought to be 'compelled to work' was 'brutal'.¹²¹⁶ According to the *Athenæum*, Carlyle believed that the 'criminal *cannot* be cured', and that the 'diseased members of the body politic are to be at once flung away'.¹²¹⁷ In short, Carlyle's aristocratic republicanism was here travestied as despotism, and his call for the moral rehabilitation of paupers and criminals as cruelty for the sake of cruelty. As we shall see, such misrepresentations would continue to be peddled by Carlyle's political opponents over subsequent decades. However, as a subsequent section will demonstrate, Carlyle received a far more sympathetic hearing in other quarters, particularly among Chartists, Owenites, and Christian Socialists.

DEFENDERS OF CARLYLE: JAMES HANNAY, DAVID MASSON, 'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ', AND ARCHIBALD G. STARK (1850-1852)

A number of other writers rushed to Carlyle's defence, arguing that his views regarding the 'Organisation of Labour' and authority had been misrepresented by reviewers. For instance, James

1214'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 641-658 (646).

1215'Latter-Day Pamphlets. - No. I. The Present Time. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The Athenæum*, no. 1162 (2nd Feb. 1850), 126-127 (126). Edmonstone Aytoun wrote: 'The mysterious process by means of which "the Noblest" is to be elevated – when he is discovered – is not indicated, but the intervention of ballot-boxes is indignantly disclaimed'. 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 641-658 (648).

1216'Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *The Palladium* (July 1850), 3-16 (5).

1217'Latter-Day Pamphlets. - No. 2. Model Prisons. By Thomas Carlyle', in *The Athenæum*, no. 1166 (2nd Mar. 1850), 227-228 (227-228).

Hannay, a self-styled 'Carlylian', published a pamphlet in response to William Edmonstoune Aytoun's review of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. Here, Hannay argued that there was nothing 'despotic' about Carlyle's proposals for 'Industrial Regiments', since these were intended to provide the unemployed with work, and, in the process, prepare them to re-enter society as independent labourers. Hannay wrote, referring to Edmonstoune Aytoun:

The *Blackwood* Critic is ferocious about Mr. Carlyle's "Industrial Regiments," and taunts him with cruelty because he would make our nomadic hordes of vagrants work. But, as usual, there is misrepresentation here, for Mr. Carlyle only proposes to make them work on condition of giving them wages. What higher boon could they have?... Carlyle expressly says in this very passage that, "all manner of just remuneration" would be supplied from the work of the "Industrial Regiments." Would not their condition be infinitely better than that of the vagrants who are to be seen by the road-sides, everywhere? ¹²¹⁸

For his part, David Masson, writing in the *North British Review*, noted that the idea of organising labour along military lines was 'a favourite idea of Mr. Carlyle's', which he had urged 'again and again in his various recent publications, and only repeats it in the pamphlet before us'. Moreover, Masson also condemned recent French attempts to combine the Organisation of Labour with democracy, branding these 'a piece of monstrous French bungling and clap-trap'. Indeed, Masson implied, Carlyle's more authoritarian approach represented a reasonable response to such failures, being, in effect, 'a Socialist idea advanced in an aristocratic spirit'. ¹²¹⁹ Moreover, Hannay and Masson were not the only commentators to endorse Carlyle's calls for 'Industrial Regiments'. For instance, in the opinion of one contributor to the *Leader*,

free access to our waste lands, would work a marvellous change in the condition of such miserable paupers as the Bucks and Wiltshire peasantry mainly consist of. And all this might be put in operation within a very few months if we had only such a governor as Mr. Carlyle demands. ¹²²⁰

¹²¹⁸*Blackwood v. Carlyle: A Vindication. By a Carlylian* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1850), 33-34.

¹²¹⁹David Masson, review of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, in *North British Review*, XIV (Nov. 1850), 18-20, 23, 25.

¹²²⁰'Wages in Bucks and Lancashire', in *The Leader* (28th Dec. 1850), 947. Interestingly, an article published on the same page of the *Leader* informed readers: 'John Stuart Mill has recorded his "conviction that the industrial economy which divides society absolutely into two portions, the payers of wages and the receivers of them, the first counted by thousands and the last by millions, is neither fit for nor is capable of indefinite duration; and the possibility of changing this system for one of combination without dependence and unity of interest instead of organized hostility depends altogether upon the future developments of the Partnership principle"' ('Partnership en Commandite', in *The Leader* [28th Dec. 1850], 947). Thus, while the *Leader* showed some sympathy for Carlyle's idea of 'Industrial Regiments', it also recognised that Mill was getting at broadly the same point, namely, that the

Another interesting assessment, and, indeed, adaptation, of Carlyle's proposals was put forward by an anonymous writer signing himself 'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ', in a *Present-Day Pamphlet* (1850). Here, 'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ', located Carlyle's proposals alongside those of 'M. Louis Blanc', as well as current attempts being made in London to form associations of 'Operative Tailors'. According to the author, Blanc's democratic approach had been 'found to be utopian', while the kind of piecemeal attempts at association being made in London would help only a handful of workers. 'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ' thus preferred Carlyle's proposals for provision of work by central government. Indeed, he endorsed Carlyle's authoritarianism up to a point, writing that 'it would be but reasonable' to 'lace' beggars and criminals 'under “Industrial Colonels, Work-masters,” &c., and drive them like a herd of cattle to their work'. However, he then added that most of the unemployed were 'honest', 'industrious', and 'anxious to keep out of the workhouse', and would thus 'but too gladly work, if the work was to be had, without being flogged or shot'.¹²²¹ 'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ' then set out his own ideas about how government might go about providing such individuals with work. He wrote:

all government work should be put into the hands of committees of persons competent and willing to undertake the same. A separate committee for different species of work. These should undertake to carry out a principle by which equitable wages and fair hours of labour should be appointed to the workers. The orders shall be given into the hands of the committee with certain broad limits or instructions as to general terms, price, &c., instead of being given to contractors, as at present... Rooms for beginners might also be appointed, so that many ignorant or unskilled might be taught the art, and thus put into a way of making a living... The committee being men independent of interested motives, and with some time upon their hands than a government official, would take a pleasure in carrying out the arrangements calculated to be of so much benefit to the poorer classes... All that the committee would have to do, would be to see the work carried out in the ordinary way; but instead of contractors getting their profits off the workmen by reducing their wages, see that the workpeople get their full and proper remuneration; that honest, worthy people be employed, and that no chicanery, or oppression of any kind be practised upon them. This would, in itself, tend to regulate wages, improve the conditions of the working classes, and

Organisation of Labour had become a pressing necessity.

¹²²¹'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ', *A Present-Day Pamphlet: Condition of the Labouring Poor Considered, with Suggestions for their Amelioration, Physical and Moral* (London: Whittaker & Co. / Birkenhead: Crichton & Marshall, 1851), 21-24.

give a healthy tone to the morals of the people.¹²²²

'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ' thus agreed with 'Mr. Carlyle' that “the few wise must be got to take charge of the innumerable foolish”, while adding that 'the plan I have recommended would be less liable to arbitrary treatment or misrule'.¹²²³ However, whatever his differences with Carlyle, 'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ' was advancing broadly the same argument – that the workplace ought to become an ethical community, governed by 'competent' men, 'independent of interested motives', who would rule for the good of those subject to them. Two years later, in February 1852, Archibald Stark, one of the secretaries of the 'Poor Law Association', also sought to defend Carlyle's proposals, informing the *Manchester Weekly Dispatch* that these were both economical and humane:

Reduce the annual charge of pauperism from five to four millions sterling, the million so saved, what is it but so much money retained in the hands of the people, to be expended in the purchase of articles produced by the independent labour “at large”?... All this is quite irrespective of the *humane* feature of the question, or the collateral advantages derived by society from the instruction of the poor in habits of thought and industry, and their preparation for a future life of self-reliance.¹²²⁴

Thus, like Hannay, Stark emphasised that Carlyle's proposals were intended to morally reform the pauper, and thus prepare him for independence. A few days later, Stark attended a meeting of the 'rate-payers of Bolton', at which the question of 'Reproductive Pauper Labour' was discussed. As the *Leader* reported:

Mr. Stark explained the objects of the [Poor Law] Association which he represented... We lodged, fed, and clothed nearly a million paupers... the relief was doled out to him as one would throw a bone to a dog... It was right that the working classes should see that in the day of trouble and distress they could have a refuge to which they could apply for shelter “without losing all that self-respect which was the very bone and sinew of man's existence.” Mr. Stark was much applauded throughout his speech. A working man named Ralph Kennedy spoke in support of one of the resolutions, and eulogized the system of reproductive labour as the best measure ever propounded for the regeneration of the working

1222'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ', *A Present-Day Pamphlet*, 25-29.

1223'ΧΡΙΣΤΩΦΕΡΩΣ', *A Present-Day Pamphlet*, 34.

1224Archibald G. Stark, letter to the editor of *The Weekly Dispatch*, Manchester, 16th Feb. 1852, reprinted in *The Leader* (28th Feb. 1852), 195-196.

classes.¹²²⁵

Thus, at least some of the 'rate-payers of Bolton', as well as a 'working man named Ralph Kennedy', saw nothing unrealistic or cruel in Carlyle's proposals. Indeed, they seemed to agree with Stark not only that pauperism promoted dependence, and thus moral degradation, but also that provision of work by the state might serve to secure the 'self-respect' of the labourer.

The other aspect of Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* that had irked many reviewers was that regarding the nature of authority. Whereas Carlyle had in fact propounded an aristocratic republicanism, in which authority was entrusted to the wisest and most virtuous citizens, to use for the good of the community as a whole, certain reviewers accused him of having advocated 'despotism'. For his part, James Hannay sought to refute this charge, drawing attention to the classical roots of Carlyle's argument. In doing so, he also made the classical distinction between a 'despot', who ruled in his own interest, and a 'dictator', who governed temporarily, in times of emergency, for the good of the community. Hannay wrote:

“Cromwellism” is “Despotism,” says Critic. But what if it be Wise Despotism?... Who governed Athens – the Republic? A few great men, constantly... In Rome, it was the last sin and profanity to offer the regal *diadema* to mortal man. Yet, the consuls and the real *Senatus* always *governed*. See what power Cicero had during his consulate. And in express recognition of the importance of their Noblest, that noble people always in times of crisis and danger, elected a Dictator.¹²²⁶

In sum, as Hannay's words suggest, the views that Carlyle had expressed in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* regarding authority ultimately stemmed from an ancient tradition of aristocratic republicanism, in which the 'Wise' and the 'Noblest' would govern for the good of all. As the following section will demonstrate, the 'Organisation of Labour' was also the key issue in shaping Chartist and Owenite responses to Carlyle's *Pamphlets*.

¹²²⁵'Reproductive Pauper Labour', in *The Leader* (28th Feb. 1852), 196.

¹²²⁶*Blackwood v. Carlyle: A Vindication. By a Carlylian* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1850), 26-28.

THE CHARTIST RESPONSE TO THE *LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS*

Writing in *Eliza Cook's Journal*, one reviewer had opined: 'On the whole we regret, in common we believe with most of Carlyle's admirers, the publication of these last-named pamphlets, as tending greatly to diminish his influence'.¹²²⁷ However, while this might have been the case in certain circles, the publication of the *Pamphlets* did little to diminish Carlyle's influence amongst the Chartists. To the contrary, it seems that, over the subsequent years, this continued to grow. As has been noted in the previous chapter, the Chartists had, in 1848, again petitioned Parliament for the franchise, simultaneously staging a mass demonstration at Kennington Common in London. However, this having failed, some Chartists turned to 'physical force' methods, giving the state a pretext for repression of the movement. Several leading Chartists found themselves in prison, and, upon their release, a consensus emerged that a change of strategy was necessary. Events across the Channel in France offered an example to follow, and many Chartists embraced Louis Blanc's programme of an 'Organisation of Labour'. This, as Gregory Claeys has put it, underlay the 'official Chartist acceptance of a largely socialist programme'.¹²²⁸ Thus, according to Margot Finn, 'if the early Chartists saw the state chiefly in terms of an invasive force perpetuating aristocratic and industrial rule, late Chartism – inspired by the February Revolution – articulated a vision of the state in which intervention in social and economic life was the essence of good government'.¹²²⁹ However, as we have seen, Louis Blanc was not the only proponent of the 'Organisation of Labour'; Carlyle, following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, had been propagating the idea in Britain for some time. Indeed, this section will argue that the relevant writings of Carlyle, as well as those of Louis Blanc, offered the Chartists a crucial resource in their attempts to rethink their strategy during these years.

On 11th November 1848, *The Labour League, or Journal of the National Association of United Trades*, appeared with the following inscription beneath its title: "‘This that they call 'Organizing of Labour' is, if well understood, the problem of the whole future, for all who will in future pretend to govern men” - Thomas Carlyle'. The paper, which had been founded with Chartist support, then explained, in the front page article, directly beneath the inscription:

Social invariably succeeds political agitation. Baffled in one direction, the masses try an

¹²²⁷'Thomas Carlyle', in *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 3 (12th Oct. 1850), 369-371 (369, 371).

¹²²⁸Gregory Claeys, *Citizens and Saints: Politics and Anti-Politics in Early British Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 268-272.

¹²²⁹Finn, *After Chartism*, 92. See also 57-59, 86.

other; because the evils they complain of remain unremedied. The recent trials and sentences [of Chartist leaders] in London and elsewhere for what are called political offences, have, no doubt, for the time being, given a check to the movement in that direction... [But now] social doctrines, which deal with the fundamental principles of all human associations, are sown broadcast in the public mind. The press of this country... daily do their best to misrepresent these doctrines, and to hold up their disciples and promulgators to execration; and we must admit with considerable success, so far as certain classes of the community are concerned... We do not mean to assert that all the doctrines or all the propositions of the new school of economists, called Socialists, are true. But we do say that whatever of truth their theory contains, cannot be lied down by any amount of calumny or misrepresentation whatever.¹²³⁰

It thus seems that, for the *Labour League*, Carlyle was considered an ally, alongside other 'Socialists'. Moreover, despite the reprobation of 'certain classes of the community', the *Labour League* appears to have enthusiastically embraced Carlyle's 'Organisation of Labour', as a 'social' alternative to the Chartists' failed 'political' strategy. In an article published in the *Northern Star*, another leading Chartist journal, the following month, a similar analysis was put forward. Here, the author began by pointing out that, only a few years ago, Carlyle's writings had been all the rage amongst 'the scribes and spouters of the day'. However, this had changed since the 'revolution of February in France'. The latter, the author explained, had sought 'first, to secure work to all who needed it, and were willing to labour', and 'second, to distribute the products of that labour upon equitable principles, and in such a way as to promote the general well-being of the community'. In Britain, such attempts provoked the ire of 'jobbers', 'profit-mongers', 'and all the various classes who prefer to live in luxury upon the labour of others', who immediately set about orchestrating 'a Press conspiracy against Labour and its rights'. In opposition, the author asserted, citing Carlyle on the 'Condition-of-England question':

the industrious classes of this country... ask simply that the land and the raw material of wealth may be freely open to their labour; that they may have liberty to make the soil and the mines – the manufactory and the engine-shop – the sea and the river – more fruitful in all kinds of wealth – and that, having done so, this wealth shall be shared in all classes in such a manner as shall conduce to the mutual good-will, contentment, and prosperity of the whole population... Every man willing to work honestly for his living, [must] be assured of a

¹²³⁰'Rights of Labour', in *The Labour League, or Journal of the National Association of United Trades*, vol. I, no. 15 (11th Nov. 1848), 113-114.

comfortable subsistence, and until this great object is accomplished, there can be no safety for any “interest” or any “class” in the country. “The Condition of England Question” must, once more, become fashionable.¹²³¹

Thus, it appears that, like the *Labour League*, the *Northern Star* had by 1848 embraced Carlyle's vision of an 'Organisation of Labour'.

Even after the publication of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* in 1850, Carlyle remained popular in Chartist circles. For instance, in May 1850, the Chartist leader Thomas Cooper, writing in his *Cooper's Journal*, informed his readers that a 'Parliament elected by Manhood Suffrage is not to be looked for at present'.¹²³² Then, in an article on the 'Organisation of Labour', published in the same edition of the journal, Cooper cited from Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, writing:

Let men laugh at Louis Blanc as they may, he has stirred the minds of all our great thinkers. Thomas Carlyle, with all his dislike of “Universal Suffrages and Ballot-boxes,” asserts that the Organisation of Labour is the duty of a Government... In a late number of his 'Latter Day Pamphlets', he is proposing “Industrial Regiments of the New Era,” with “continents of new real work opened out, for the Home and all other Public Offices among us”... “Wise obedience and wise command. I foresee that the regimenting of Pauper Banditti into Soldiers of Industry is but the beginning of this blessed process, which will extend to the topmost heights of our Society; and, in the course of generations, make us all once more a Governed Commonwealth, and Civitas Dei, if it please God!... thus will all Masters of Workmen, private Captains of Industry, be forced to incessantly co-operate with the State and its Public Captains; they regimenting in their way, the State in its way, with ever-widening field; till their fields meet (so to speak) and coalesce.”¹²³³

As we have seen, this was the passage of the *Pamphlets* in which Carlyle had fused together the writings of the Saint-Simonians, Louis Blanc, and the Scottish republican Andrew Fletcher. Thus, it seems, Carlyle's vision of an industrial republic had appealed to Cooper. Indeed, as Margot Finn has noted, republican themes were common amongst the Chartists, who 'consistently located their

1231'Employment for the People', in *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (23rd Dec. 1848), 4.

1232Thomas Cooper, 'The Only Help for Workmen', in *Cooper's Journal: Or, Unfettered Thinker and Plain Speaker for Truth, Freedom, and Progress*, Vol. I, no. 20 (18th May 1850), 305-307.

1233'Notes Which They Who Run May Read', in *Cooper's Journal: Or, Unfettered Thinker and Plain Speaker for Truth, Freedom, and Progress*, Vol. I, no. 20 (18th May 1850), 309.

ideological roots in the Puritan revolution' of the seventeenth century.¹²³⁴ This was particularly evident in the *English Republic*, a journal edited by the Chartist leader W. J. Linton, which Finn describes as 'an outgrowth of left-wing French politics and the English radical tradition'.¹²³⁵ Given that Carlyle combined both left-wing French politics (the Saint-Simonians and Louis Blanc) with an older republican tradition (Cromwell and Fletcher), it is perhaps unsurprising that he received a sympathetic response in the journal. In the first edition of the latter, Linton had written:

notwithstanding 'free trade', non-intervention, 'constitutional' compromise ('every one for himself'. 'let alone', 'get what you can'), - and other prevalent atheisms, - I believe that there are yet some men in England, besides Thomas Carlyle, who respect the worth of Cromwell; some men who honour the memory of Milton.. Desirous, not of renewing the form of Puritanism, but of revivifying the soul of earnestness, which marked the brief day of our Commonwealth as the grandest period of English history, I shall essay to show wherein we republicans of the nineteenth century may imitate the worthiest of our race, in what we ought to advance beyond them... Who will stand by me for the restoration of the Commonwealth, for the foundation of the English Republic? ¹²³⁶

In sum, Carlyle's vision of an industrial commonwealth, brought about through the 'Organisation of Labour', would have appealed to the Chartists for two reasons: first, it provided a 'social' alternative to a failed 'political' strategy; second, it did so without sacrificing republican ideals, rather displacing them into the world of work.

As has been seen in an earlier section, the middle-class press had taken exception not only to Carlyle's calls for the 'Organisation of Labour', but also his advocacy of a new aristocracy. In particular, such reviewers had sought to misrepresent the latter as little more than a craving after despotism. However, the Chartist press offered a more sympathetic (and accurate) reading of Carlyle. For instance, in a review of M. A. Romieu's 'Era of the Caesars', the *Northern Star* made clear that Carlyle subscribed to an aristocratic republicanism, in which authority was to be vested in the wisest, most virtuous citizens of the community, for the benefit of the community as whole. This

1234Finn, *After Chartism*, 36. More recently, Blair Worden has noted that during the early nineteenth century, popular radicals often called for a new Cromwell to disperse a corrupt, oligarchic Parliament, and to restore the rights of working people. Moreover, Worden adds, it was 'perhaps around 1850 that socialist and republican Cromwellianism [was] at its peak' (Worden, *Roundhead Reputations*, 246-248).

1235Finn, *After Chartism*, 115.

1236W. J. Linton, 'The English Republic' (editor's opening address, dated Dec. 1850), in *The English Republic*, ed. W. J. Linton, Vol. I (Jan. 1851), 3-5.

contrasted sharply with Romieu, who really did advocate despotism. According to the *Star's* reviewer:

With [Carlyle] forms of Government are nothing. Men are everything. The only effective, strong, and God-ordained Government, is that of the best, most virtuous, strong-minded man amongst us. The best is always at the top, no matter from what class he may be drawn... M. Romieu is of quite a contrary opinion. He has mounted a hobby which he calls "Caesarism," and rides it stoutly. He, like Mr. Carlyle, would substitute the will of one man for the more complicated machinery of representative government.... but his "Caesars" need not, like Mr. Carlyle's "heroes," be the wisest and best men of their age. He takes them without a character, and from the mere fact of their success, concludes they are worthy of power. With him, Might is emphatically and literally Right.¹²³⁷

Indeed, the 'Organisation of Labour' required active intervention by the state in economic affairs, on behalf of the working-classes. Having embraced the 'Organisation of Labour', the Chartists might thus have been more open to Carlyle's arguments regarding authority than those middle-class critics who still held to *laissez-faire*. In the above article, the *Star's* reviewer worried that Carlyle placed too much faith in individual 'heroes', emphasising that the authority of the latter was ultimately valid only insofar as it benefited the community as whole. As he put it:

The progressive improvement of nations depends upon Institutions – not upon a man. These Institutions, in fact, form men. They provide the necessary material and influences for developing the organic capabilities of each individual, and in proportion to their expansive or restrictive character, will be the amount and quality of mental power brought into action for the general advantage of the community.¹²³⁸

However, as we have seen, this was the role that Carlyle had reserved to a system of national education. Indeed, Carlyle's arguments regarding education were endorsed in an article that appeared in the *English Republic* around the same time. Here, W. J. Linton claimed that private efforts to improve education ought to be supported as a temporary palliative, but that the ultimate goal remained a system of national, public education. He wrote, quoting the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*:

¹²³⁷Review of M. A. Romieu, 'The Era of the Caesars', in *The Northern Star* (8th Mar. 1851), 3.

¹²³⁸Review of M. A. Romieu, 'The Era of the Caesars', in *The Northern Star* (8th Mar. 1851), 3.

The true ground of action here is well put by Thomas Carlyle: “In our present mode of management in England, where the so-called governors have neither honour nor will attempt this long-neglected, and imperatively needed enterprise of getting the people taught, it has become the duty of every good citizen to come forward and do what in him lies that it be neglected no longer. - Hands to the work, then!” Ay, every hand. But, while struggling for leave to instruct yourselves, do not forget, nor let it be forgotten, that the best scheme to be had now is but an expedient till such time as we can get governors with both honour and will to make education one of the duties of the State.¹²³⁹

As with the 'Organisation of Labour', a system of national education would require state intervention on behalf of the working-classes, and, thus, the exercise of authority.

AN OWENITE ON THE *LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS*: JAMES HOLE

In addition to this favourable reception amongst the Chartists, Carlyle and his *Latter-Day Pamphlets* also resonated with a number of Owenites. During its early stages, the Owenite movement had dedicated its energies primarily to the establishment of model communities, rather than to planning at the level of the nation-state. However, following the failure of several communities, particularly that of Queenwood in 1845, the Owenites were looking for alternatives. As Gregory Claeys puts it, 'after repeated failures', 'Owen finally became convinced that *only* the state could commence the new moral world'.¹²⁴⁰ In 1848, the Owenite rump had founded a journal entitled the *Spirit of the Age*,¹²⁴¹ and, in January 1849, a French socialist newspaper, *Le Travail affranchi*, was able to inform its readers:

The banner of socialism has been unfurled at London, by a new journal, the *Spirit of the Age*. We find in this fortnightly review the ideas and the principles that we ourselves advocate. Our comrades on the other side of the Channel have, like us, raised the the social question, and they have taken as their motto the following words of Thomas Carlyle: “The 'Organisation of Labour' is the problem of the whole future, for all who would in future pretend to govern men.” The *Spirit of the Age* has informed its readers of the appearance of *Le Travail affranchi*, for which we cordially thank our brothers in socialism.¹²⁴²

1239'Other Associations: How Republicans Should Act Toward Them', in *The English Republic: God and the People*, ed. W. J. Linton, Vol. I (n.d. [c. Mar.-May 1851]), 178.

1240Claeys, *Citizens and Saints*, 161-162. See also Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium*, 146-147.

1241Claeys, *Citizens and Saints*, 265-268.

1242'Mouvement Socialiste – Le Socialisme en Angleterre', in *Le Travail Affranchi*, no. 3 (21st Jan. 1849), 6.

Thus, in shifting their emphasis from model communities to a national system of planning, and, in the process, bringing themselves increasingly into line with the state socialism then prevalent in France, the Owenites too had drawn on the writings of Carlyle.

A particularly vivid illustration of the Owenite response to Carlyle during these years is provided by the Leeds socialist James Hole, and particularly his work of 1851, *Lectures on Social Science and the Organization of Labour*. In his preface, Hole disavowed attempts to 'initiate society into some Owenian Parallelogram', arguing instead for 'Practical Socialism' at the level of the nation-state, including such measures as 'the regulation of Factories and Mines', 'National Education', and 'the employment of paupers in productive labour'. Here, in explaining the rationale for such measures, Hole employed Carlyle's signature medieval analogy, arguing that even if 'the Feudal system' had not permitted 'the Vassal freedom', it 'certainly gave a greater guarantee against absolute want than is at present possessed by the "Independent labourer"'. Moreover, like Carlyle, Hole argued that for the majority of labourers, such 'independence' was a sham, meaning, in reality, slavery to the 'domination of capital', the 'evils of gluts', and the 'influence of competition'. Preferable to such sham independence, he argued, would be 'some bond of *mutual dependence*', 'some relationship of common welfare', such as that which had been embodied in the 'Guilds and Corporations of former days'.¹²⁴³ Further on in the book, Hole examined some recent proposals as to how this might be accomplished. 'One form in which this rebellion to the supply and demand system manifests itself', he wrote, 'is in the claim recently set up for participation by the workmen in profits'. As an example, Hole cited Michel Chevalier, a former Saint-Simonian:

"I am convinced [writes Chevalier] that this participation will change the character of labour, and still more of the labourer; that it will confer on the latter a dignity, a love of order, a spirit of good conduct, which he could obtain in no other way. Those inarticulate contests between the master and the worker which produce so many disorders, so many little acts of havoc, such a waster of living force, - will disappear as if by enchantment; and it is motives like these, above all, connected as they are with moral, political, and social order, that make me eagerly long for the realisation of that principle."

As other examples of such an approach to the 'Organisation of Labour', Hole then cited 'the author of "Past and Present"' (i.e. Carlyle), 'the author of the "Claims of Labour"' (i.e. Arthur Helps), and

¹²⁴³James Hole, *Lectures on Social Science and the Organization of Labour* (London: John Chapman, 1851), v-viii.

John Stuart Mill. However, while Hole admitted that 'True Captains of Industry, like Samuel Greg of Hyde, and Leclaire of Paris, - far seeing and benevolent men, - may do much', such an approach would ultimately prove insufficient. He explained:

The origin of low wages is in deficient capital to employ all who live by employment. Unless the surplus labour is prevented by some means from entering into the labour market, the return to the labourer cannot rise much above the rate determined by competition. A benevolent employer, however willing to divide his profits with his labourers, cannot do so while numbers are clamorous for employment, for as the workman will take the lowest wages, a less scrupulous or considerate tradesman will beat him out of the market.¹²⁴⁴

According to Hole, some means would have to be found to employ such 'surplus labour', thus taking it off the market. However, having disavowed the scheme of profit-sharing advocated in *Past and Present* (1843), Hole then turned approvingly to Carlyle's subsequent writings, which, as has been noted, tended to stress the initiative of the state over that of individual 'Captains of Industry'. In particular, Hole cited with approval the following passage from Carlyle's article 'Irish Regiments of the New Era' (1848). Here, Carlyle had employed the Saint-Simonians' military metaphor, asking whether 'organisation to fight' was really 'the only organisation achievable'. He then responded to his own question, writing:

“the future work of human wisdom and human heroism is discernible to be even this, Not of fighting with and beating to death one's poor fellow creatures in other countries, but of regimenting into blessed activity more and more one's poor fellow creatures in one's own country, for their and all people's profit more and more... Colonels of field-labour, as well as colonels of field-fighting, doubt it not, *can* be found, if you will search for them with diligence”.¹²⁴⁵

Moreover, Hole then set out a plan for 'Industrial Colonies', founded on land purchased by the state, and manned by able-bodied paupers, which was almost identical to that proposed in Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. Here, Hole echoed Carlyle's arguments regarding the contribution of authority to the moral rehabilitation of paupers, that is, their restoration to a state of self-mastery, self-respect, and independence. Hole wrote:

¹²⁴⁴James Hole, *Lectures on Social Science and the Organization of Labour* (London: John Chapman, 1851), 39-41, 44.

¹²⁴⁵Cited in Hole, *Lectures*, 82-86.

As the superintendence of so large a number of paupers would be impossible, they should be subdivided into *colonies*, putting each under the superintendence of persons of known ability in those departments of industry to which the colony was to be principally devoted, and who also possessed habits of discipline, and the power of governing numbers... The pauper would be considered as a Debtor to the state for the whole amount of food, clothing, and share of capital advanced to him, and Creditor by the proceeds of his labour. When these two have balanced (i.e. when he has repaid the whole he had consumed), the restriction will cease, - he assuming the position of an independent labourer.

Continuing, Hole repeated Carlyle's argument that institutional reforms were only valid insofar as they contributed to the moral improvement of individuals. Moreover, like Carlyle, Hole defined 'independence' in terms of self-mastery and self-respect, achieved primarily through work. He argued:

This system would secure several advantages. It would attack Pauperism at its chief sources, viz., deficient wages-fund, and immoral, improvident conduct... The voluntary pauper who likes to *eat* without fulfilling the condition of work, would find no encouragement, while to the honest pauper, with an average labour, and the quantity and quality of food sufficient for health, - the consciousness that he is not deemed an outcast, but earns what he eats, - that his children will be educated, - that when he has earned his independence he will obtain it, and may leave it to his children, - abundant motives are supplied for self-improvement and industry. If the 'Organization of Labour' mean anything, it means that the labourer should have the opportunity, if he deserve and will it, to become *free* and *independent*, - not independent of *labour*, and free from the *other duties* of life – (as the so-called 'Independent men', but really most dependent of all, now misuse the word), - but independent in the sense that each man shall be the arbiter of his own fate, instead of being a slave or hanger-on to his fellow man.¹²⁴⁶

In sum, Hole, like Carlyle, argued that mutual dependence, including dependence on the public authority, might eventually serve as a means to the collective independence of the labouring classes.

¹²⁴⁶Hole, *Lectures*, 70-74. Hole's italics.

'THE REPUBLIC OF THE WORKSHOP': EDWARD VANSITTART NEALE AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS

Alongside the Chartists and the Owenites, the 'Christian Socialists' also continued to give Carlyle a sympathetic hearing during the revolutionary years. For instance, in 1848, the Christian Socialist journal, *Politics for the People*, had reiterated Carlyle's strictures against *laissez-faire*, declaring: 'From our hearts, we believe that Carlyle is right'. Moreover, in the same article, the Christian Socialists condemned Parliament for having refused to regulate the hours of London bakers, asking: 'Why, then, this unwillingness to interfere on behalf of the poor bakers? Have the events in France frightened our isle from its propriety?'.¹²⁴⁷ However, a particularly striking instance of the Christian Socialist response to Carlyle was a missive penned by one of their number, Edward Vansittart Neale, in 1851. Addressed to *Notes to the People*, a journal edited by the Chartist leader Ernest Jones, this letter appealed to the Chartists' increased willingness to prioritise social and economic reform over 'politics'. Moreover, it also echoed many of the republican themes that were discernible in both Chartist and Owenite responses to Carlyle. Regarding the 'Co-operative movement', Vansittart Neale wrote:

I augur a better destiny for England, in great measure because I believe that the good sense of the majority of the population, now alike destitute of political power and social rights, is teaching them rapidly, and surely, the vastly great importance of the latter over the former; that they are daily becoming more alive to the comparatively little good to be derived from the possession of the "ten thousandth part of a master of tongue fence", in what Carlyle disparagingly calls "the great assembly of palaver"; more satisfied that... the true republic for them is the *republic of the workshop*.

According to Vansittart Neale, the 'richer classes of this land' would be willing to aid the 'elevation of the poorer class by means of associated efforts'. Moreover, in addition to the above reference to Carlyle, Vansittart Neale also cited 'the important conclusions of Mr. Stewart Mill [sic], the first of modern political economists in favour of association'.¹²⁴⁸ In sum, Vansittart Neale seems to have been realigning republican values from politics into associated labour, citing both Carlyle and Mill in his support. Over all, the extent of the backlash against the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* has been

¹²⁴⁷'The Case of the Journeymen Bakers', in *Politics for the People*, 14 (22nd July 1848), 231-232.

¹²⁴⁸Edward Vansittart Neale, letter to the editor, London, 28 Oct. 1851, in *Notes to the People*, ed. Ernest Jones, Vol. I [Oct. / Nov. 1851?], 561-562. Vansittart Neale's italics.

exaggerated, due to a narrow focus on the mainstream periodical press.¹²⁴⁹ While Carlyle's calls for an 'Organisation of Labour' might have alienated the middle-classes, they played an important role in facilitating the Chartists' transition to socialism, the Owenites' shift to state planning, and the Christian Socialists' attempts at co-operation.

FREDERICK (1858)

Having surveyed reader responses to the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, we can now turn to Carlyle's later writings, in which he continued to advocate the Saint-Simonian concept of an 'Organisation of Labour'. In 1858, the first volumes of Carlyle's biography of *Frederick the Great* were published. According to some recent commentators, *Frederick* was little more than a glorification of 'militarism'.¹²⁵⁰ However, while these volumes certainly did contain a great deal of material relating to armies and military manoeuvres, they also had another side. Indeed, as John Ruskin remarked, any 'careful reader' would perceive that Carlyle loved Frederick as well at peace as at war, and admired him primarily for 'his constant purpose to use every power entrusted to him for the good of his people'.¹²⁵¹ In the first two volumes of *Frederick*, Carlyle in fact dealt not so much with Frederick himself, as with his father, Friedrich Wilhelm. In doing so, Carlyle portrayed the latter as a model Captain of Industry, working tirelessly for the benefit of his subjects. As Carlyle explained:

Fighting hero, had the Public known it, was not his essential character, though he had to fight a great deal. He was essentially an Industrial man; great in organizing, regulating, in constraining chaotic heaps to become cosmic for him. He drains bogs, settles colonies in the waste places of his Dominions, cuts canals; unweariedly encourages trade and work.¹²⁵²

According to Carlyle, Friedrich Wilhelm entered into a country that had become the prey of 'Robber Barons', and immediately began to ensure that 'the Laws' would be 'obeyed again'.¹²⁵³ Having done this, he set about organising the nation for useful work:

¹²⁴⁹C.f. Fred Kaplan, 'Over the next decade, whatever glimmer of hope he had that his writings could make him a public force for political reform slowly dimmed. It was extinguished with the hostile reception of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*' (*Thomas Carlyle*, 274-274).

¹²⁵⁰For Louise Merwin Young, the 'Prussian Army is the real hero and protagonist of the eight volumes of *Frederick*' (*Thomas Carlyle and the Art of History* [Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939], 127). John D. Rosenberg remarks that *Frederick* represented the point at which Carlyle began 'to worship, what he once decried' (*Carlyle and the Burden of History* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 161-162).

¹²⁵¹'The Future of England' (14th Dec 1869), in *The Crown of Wild Olive – Munera Pulveris – Pre-Raphaelitism – Aratra Pentelici* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1894) 436-437.

¹²⁵²*Frederick the Great*, I:249-250. See also I:263. Carlyle had already made the same point about the early Markgraves (I:96).

¹²⁵³*Frederick the Great*, I:92, 138-141.

he went over, went into and through, every department of Prussian Business in that fashion, steadily, warily, irresistibly compelling every item of it, large and little, to take that same character of perfect economy and solidity, of utility pure and simple.¹²⁵⁴

Continuing, Carlyle argued that the activities of Friedrich Wilhelm in this regard were not intended to produce material wealth alone, but also to morally improve his subjects. For instance, Carlyle wrote how Frederick

drained bogs, planted colonies, established manufactures... and did prove really a terror to evil-doers of various kinds, especially to prevaricators, defalcators, imaginary workers, and slippery, unjust persons... Yearly he made his country richer, and this not in money alone, but in frugality, diligence, punctuality, veracity.¹²⁵⁵

Thus, in addition to his military achievements, Friedrich Wilhelm's 'value for industrial labourers' was 'likewise great', he being 'not less a Captain of Work, to his Nation, than of other things'.¹²⁵⁶ In sum, even in the initial volumes of *Frederick*, published almost thirty years after Carlyle's encounter with the Saint-Simonians, the theory of 'Captains of Industry' was still discernible.

As noted in the previous chapter, Carlyle had not rejected the science of political economy outright, but had rather argued that it ought to be subordinate to wider social, political, and moral considerations, particularly the condition of the working classes. In the early volumes of *Frederick*, Carlyle argued that Friedrich Wilhelm, in performing his duties as a 'Captain of Work', had achieved this reconciliation, particularly through his understanding of 'National Economics'. According to Carlyle, Friedrich Wilhelm had been 'the Brandenburg Spartan King, acquainted with National Economics'. For Carlyle, 'Friedrich Wilhelm's History' was thus 'one of Economics; which study, so soon as there are Kings again in this world, will be precious to them'.¹²⁵⁷ In sum, while Carlyle might have rejected the 'restricted' system of political economy, as commonly practised in Britain, he was far more sympathetic to the kind of 'national economics' that had been prevalent in

¹²⁵⁴*Frederick the Great*, I:286.

¹²⁵⁵*Frederick the Great*, I:289-290.

¹²⁵⁶*Frederick the Great*, II:95-97. See also the passages on Friedrich Wilhelm's rebuilding of Berlin (III:48-50, 192).

One reviewer wrote: 'Under his paternal rule his country prospered to a singular degree; his wise, vigorous, and most liberal administration turning whole provinces into a garden which had been a desert'. 'History of Friedrich II. Of Prussia', in *The Dublin University Magazine*, LIII (Jan. 1859), 12-31 (29).

¹²⁵⁷*Frederick the Great*, I: 287, 293, 295.

Moreover, Carlyle sought to present Friedrich Wilhelm not only as a model 'Captain of Industry' and political economist, but also as an exemplar of aristocratic authority. As we have seen, in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle had argued not for despotism or tyranny, but rather for the investment of sovereignty in the wisest and most virtuous citizens of the community. Moreover, he had taken care to emphasise that these leading citizens would be subject to some measure of popular control, and would thus be unable to govern in an altogether arbitrary manner. In the early volumes of *Frederick*, Carlyle returned to this theme, arguing that Friedrich Wilhelm, despite his authority, had always honoured the rule of law. For instance, Carlyle claimed that Friedrich Wilhelm, 'though an absolute Monarch', was not a vulgar despot or tyrant, having never dreamed 'of governing without Law, still less without Justice, which he knows well to be the one basis for him and for all Kings and men'. According to Carlyle, 'the meanest Prussian man that could find out a definite Law, coming athwart Friedrich Wilhelm's wrath, would check Friedrich Wilhelm in mid-volley'. In this sense, 'Friedrich Wilhelm is by no means a lawless Monarch; nor are his Prussians slaves by any means: they are patient, stout-hearted, subject men'.¹²⁵⁹

REVIEWS OF *FREDERICK*

As had been the case with the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, many reviewers of *Frederick* tended to elide the distinction between aristocracy and despotism, implying that these were really the same thing. For instance, a contributor to *Fraser's Magazine*, referring to Friedrich Wilhelm, wrote that Carlyle 'makes too great a demand on our sympathy when he calls on us to admire, as he does, the Spartan brutality, and the harshness, amounting almost to madness, of this imperious despot'.¹²⁶⁰ Similarly, a reviewer writing in the *Edinburgh Review* condemned Friedrich Wilhelm as 'mean, avaricious, illiterate, brutal, choleric, and intemperate', concluding that the 'anecdotes of the capricious tyranny if this king are endless, and all excite one emotion – disgust'.¹²⁶¹ According to the *British Quarterly Review*, Carlyle had failed in attempting to transform 'the passions of the tyrant' into 'the virtues of a legislator', and 'a Bill Sykes in purple' into a 'legitimate hero'.¹²⁶² For its part,

¹²⁵⁸The version of political economy prevalent in Germany at this time did not distinguish between civil society and state, treating the two as an organic whole. See Keith Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order: German Economic Discourse, 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ch. 2.

¹²⁵⁹*Frederick the Great*, II:114.

¹²⁶⁰'Carlyle's Frederick the Great', in *Fraser's Magazine*, 58 (Dec. 1858), 631-649 (640).

¹²⁶¹'Carlyle's Frederick the Great', in, *The Edinburgh Review*, 110 (Oct. 1859), 376-410 (385, 388, 410).

¹²⁶²'Carlyle's Frederic the Great', in *The British Quarterly Review*, 29 (Jan. 1859), 239-292 (239-241).

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine considered Friedrich Wilhelm to be little more than an 'intolerable tyrant', who exhibited complete contempt for 'individual liberty'.¹²⁶³ In sum, for most reviewers of *Frederick*, Carlyle had singularly failed in his attempts to present Friedrich Wilhelm as a model governor and Captain of Industry. Indeed, according to these reviewers, Friedrich Wilhelm's methods were simply irrelevant to the realities of modern-day Britain, and could thus well afford to be ignored. Thus, as had been the case with the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, the proposals made in *Frederick* for an 'Organisation of Labour' and aristocratic rule were dismissed as unrealistic, and utopian. As *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* put it:

whatever we may think of Mr. Carlyle, in the capacity of spirit, theorist, or thinker, we shall find him but a slipshod reformer or projector. Where a truth is to be detected or an error exposed, who more acute! but when you look for remedy or reconstruction, you find either silence or fantasy.¹²⁶⁴

However, as had been the case with the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, such judgements were very much a matter of opinion, and largely depended upon the political standpoint of reviewers. As the following section will demonstrate, Carlyle's industrial, aristocratic republicanism received a far more sympathetic hearing elsewhere.

JOHN RUSKIN, JAMES LORIMER, AND JOHN STUART MILL (1857-1863)

As noted in the previous section, John Ruskin had pointed out that Carlyle's *Frederick* was more a glorification of work than it was of war. Indeed, around the time of the publication of the first volumes of *Frederick*, Ruskin himself had begun to take up many of Carlyle's ideas, particularly that of a quasi-military Organisation of Labour. As has been seen, Carlyle had originally taken this idea from the Saint-Simonians, and, in this sense, it might be argued, Ruskin too was indebted to Saint-Simonism, albeit at second-hand. For instance, in his *Political Economy of Art* (1857), Ruskin predicted that 'government' would one day 'have its soldiers of the ploughshare as well as its soldiers of the sword', and 'distribute more proudly its golden crosses of industry' than 'its bronze crosses of honour - bronzed with the crimson of blood'.¹²⁶⁵ In *Unto this Last* (1860), Ruskin

¹²⁶³'Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great. Second Notice', in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 26 (1859), 41-45 (43).

¹²⁶⁴'Carlyle: Mirage Philosophy', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXXXV (Feb. 1859), 127-154 (130).

¹²⁶⁵'The Political Economy of Art' [1857], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays on Political Economy* (London: J. M. Dent / New York: E. P. Dutton, 1907) 10-11. See also 'Unto This Last' [1860] in *ibid.*, 160-161, and 'Aratra Pentelici', in *The Crown of Wild Olive – Munera Pulveris – Pre-Raphaelitism – Aratra Pentelici* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1894), 288.

envisioned a role for individual Captains of Industry, whom he claimed were invested with 'a distinctly paternal authority' over 'the men' they 'employed'.¹²⁶⁶ However, in this regard, the success of the 'organization of labour' would ultimately depend upon the 'quantity of honesty in our captains'.¹²⁶⁷ Moreover, in the same work, Ruskin also called for the establishment of 'manufactories and workshops', 'entirely under Government regulation'. These would guarantee work to the unemployed, who would receive any further training they required. However, like Carlyle, Ruskin had little tolerance for idlers and criminals, writing:

being found objecting to work, they should be set, under compulsion of the strictest nature, to the more painful and degrading forms of necessary toil, especially to that in mines and other places of danger and the due wages of such work be retained - cost of compulsion first abstracted - to be at the workman's command, so soon as he has come to sounder mind respecting the laws of employment.¹²⁶⁸

Thus, like Carlyle, Ruskin envisioned the 'Organisation of Labour' on strictly authoritarian lines. However, also like Carlyle, Ruskin argued that such authoritarian methods aimed at the moral rehabilitation, and, ultimately, the emancipation, of those subject to them.

Indeed, Ruskin shared Carlyle's classical understanding of 'freedom' as self-mastery, and living in accordance with the laws of nature, as well his understanding of 'slavery' as slavery to one's own lower passions. As has been shown, the political corollary of this understanding of freedom was that slavish individuals ought to be ruled by their betters, who would guide them into the right path, thus 'emancipating' them from themselves. For instance, Ruskin argued that 'since the lordly part is only in a state of profitableness while ruling, and the servile only in a state of redeemableness while serving, the whole health of the state depends on the manifest separation of these two elements'.¹²⁶⁹ Rejecting negative definitions of liberty, Ruskin claimed that freedom ought to be understood in the sense of the ancient Greeks, namely, as 'deliverance' from the 'law' of one's own 'passions'.¹²⁷⁰ In his *Essays on Political Economy* (1862-1863), Ruskin made the classical origins of this argument explicit, explaining:

¹²⁶⁶'Unto This Last', 130.

¹²⁶⁷'Unto This Last', 111.

¹²⁶⁸'Unto This Last' 111-112. See also 'The Political Economy of Art', 85-86, and 'Essays on Political Economy' [1862-1863], in *Unto This Last and Other Essays*, 268-271.

¹²⁶⁹'Essays on Political Economy', 268-271.

¹²⁷⁰'Essays on Political Economy', 265.

A republic means, properly, a polity in which the state, with its all, is at every man's service, and every man, with his all, at the state's service... all forms of government are good just so far as they attain this one vital necessity of policy—that the wise and kind, few or many, shall govern the unwise and unkind... if there be many foolish persons in a state, and few wise, then it is good that the few govern.¹²⁷¹

Here, Ruskin seems to have been paraphrasing Book III of Aristotle's *Politics*. Aristotle had written:

The true forms of government... are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest... Of forms of government in which one rules, we call that which regards the common interest, kingship; that in which more than one, but not many, rule, aristocracy; and it is so called, either because the rulers are the best men, or because they have at heart the best interests of the state and of the citizens.¹²⁷²

Thus, it seems, like Carlyle, Ruskin stood in an aristocratic republican tradition dating back to Plato and Aristotle. In particular, he argued that the wisest and most virtuous citizens ought to be vested with sovereignty, on the condition that they use that sovereignty for the good of the community as a whole. Moreover, it seems that it was this theory that underpinned Ruskin's proposals for an 'Organisation of Labour', as well as his stress on the 'paternal authority' of 'Captains of Industry', therein.

Having read *Unto this Last*, Carlyle informed Ruskin: 'in every part of [it] I find a high and noble sort of truth, not one doctrine that I can intrinsically dissent from'.¹²⁷³ Around the same time, Carlyle was similarly impressed by a work by James Lorimer, entitled *Political Progress not Necessarily Democratic* (1857). Lorimer had sent a copy to Carlyle, who upon reading it, remarked that the author had set forth the same 'Anti-democratic doctrine contained in a certain man's Pamphlets'.¹²⁷⁴ In his introduction, Lorimer claimed to have 'humbly followed in the foot-prints of those whom the wisest of my readers would most revere', a possible reference to Carlyle.¹²⁷⁵ In words almost identical to those of Ruskin, Lorimer cited Aristotle's definition of legitimate government:

1271 'Essays on Political Economy', 278-280.

1272 Aristotle, 'The Politics', in *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 71.

1273 TC to John Ruskin, 30th June 1862, CL 38:106-107.

1274 TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 19th Aug. 1857, CL 33:40.

1275 James Lorimer, *Political Progress not Necessarily Democratic: or Relative Equality the True Foundation of Liberty* (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1857), v.

“Government”, [Aristotle] says, “which is the supreme authority, must be in the hands of either of the one, or the few, or the many. If the one, the few, or the many govern with a view to the benefit of the whole, these governments are legitimate; whereas those of which the object is the peculiar benefit of the one, the few, or the many, are degenerate or perverted forms”¹²⁷⁶

While Lorimer, like Carlyle, acknowledged the value of the 'suffrage' for 'giving a true and accurate political expression' of public opinion, he insisted that 'the rights of citizenship' ought to be proportioned to the performance of 'citizen duties'.¹²⁷⁷ By means of illustration, he cited the words of Pericles, the 'first citizen' of the Athenian democracy:

“In name,” says [Pericles], speaking of the constitution of Athens in his own day, “from its not being administered for the benefit of the few but of the many, it is called a democracy; but with regard to its laws, *all enjoy equality as concerns their private differences*; while with regard to public rank, *according as each man has reputation* for anything, he is preferred for public honours, not so much from consideration of party as of merit; nor again, on the ground of poverty, while he is able to do the state any good service, is he prevented by the obscurity of his position”.¹²⁷⁸

According to Lorimer, Pericles' influence over the democracy of Athens 'was legitimate, not on the monarchical, but on the republican theory of the state', in that insofar as he 'counselled nothing which he did not conscientiously believe to be for the common weal', he 'did only what, in every free state, every citizen is not only entitled, but called upon to do'.¹²⁷⁹ In sum, Lorimer, like Carlyle and Ruskin, was here advocating an aristocratic republicanism, ultimately stemming from the political thought of ancient Greece.

In addition to the approbation of Carlyle, Lorimer's work also garnered a positive review from John Stuart Mill, who praised the author for having recognised that 'universal suffrage' need not necessarily mean '*equal* suffrage'.¹²⁸⁰ However, according to Mill, what Lorimer 'aim[ed] at', was

¹²⁷⁶Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 104-105. The citation is from the *Politics*.

¹²⁷⁷Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 222, 207.

¹²⁷⁸Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 152-155. As reported by Thucydides.

¹²⁷⁹Lorimer, *Political Progress*, 257-258.

¹²⁸⁰'Recent Writers on Reform' [Apr. 1859], in *Dissertations and Discussions* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), III:66.

'actually realize[d]' in Thomas Hare's proposals for proportional representation (the following year, Hare wrote to Carlyle, attempting to win his support).¹²⁸¹ As Mill explained, 'if a man of talents and virtue could count as votes for his return all electors in any part of the kingdom who would like to be represented by him', the likely result would be an 'assembly' containing 'the *élite* of the nation', 'the ablest heads and noblest hearts'.¹²⁸² Over the following years, Mill expanded upon this theme in *On Liberty* (1859) and the *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), both of which featured Carlyle as an interlocutor. In the former, Mill accepted that no 'government by a democracy' ever 'did or could rise above mediocrity, except in so far as the sovereign Many have let themselves be guided (which in their best times they always have done) by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few'. However, Mill then qualified his statement, adding, in a reference to Carlyle:

I am not countenancing the sort of "hero-worship" which applauds the strong man of genius for forcibly seizing on the government of the world and making it do his bidding in spite of itself. All he can claim is, freedom to point out the way.¹²⁸³

However, as has been seen, Carlyle had argued that authority ultimately relied upon moral force, and could not expect to rule through simple diktat or compulsion. In this sense, his position was in fact very close to that of Mill. Two years later, in the *Considerations*, Mill dealt with Carlyle in similar terms. Again, he admitted that Carlyle had a case:

It is not much to be wondered at, if impatient or disappointed reformers, groaning under the impediments opposed to the most salutary public improvements by the ignorance, the indifference, the intractableness, the perverse obstinacy of a people, and the corrupt combinations of selfish private interests armed with the powerful weapons afforded by free institutions, should at times sigh for a strong hand to bear down all these obstacles, and compel a recalcitrant people to be better governed.

However, Mill then added that 'those who look in any such direction for the realization of their hopes leave out of the idea of good government its principal element, the improvement of the

¹²⁸¹Hare argued that 'intelligence' would be 'enabled to select intelligence', thus solving the problems that Carlyle had identified in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (Hare to TC, 26th Apr. 1860, in National Library of Scotland, Acc. 11388, no. 30, cited in Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 256 [n]).

¹²⁸²'Recent Writers on Reform', 74, 80-81, 84.

¹²⁸³'On Liberty', [1859] in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, Oxford World's Classics Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 74.

people themselves'. Again, this was a misrepresentation, Carlyle having repeatedly made clear that authority was only legitimate insofar as it served to reform and improve those subject to it. Nonetheless, Mill then made yet another concession to Carlyle, drawing the classical distinction between a temporary dictator and a despot. He wrote:

I am far from condemning, in cases of extreme exigency, the assumption of absolute power in the form of a temporary dictatorship. Free nations have, in times of old, conferred such power by their own choice, as a necessary medicine for diseases of the body politic which could not be got rid of by less violent means. But its acceptance, even for a time strictly limited, can only be excused, if, like Solon or Pittacus, the dictator employs the whole power he assumes in removing the obstacles which debar the nation from the enjoyment of freedom.¹²⁸⁴

In his review of Lorimer and Hare, Mill had asserted 'the importance of adapting our improvements, whenever it is possible, to the framework of the Constitution'.¹²⁸⁵ Similarly, in his *Autobiography*, he made clear that the *Considerations* had confined themselves to reforms 'within the province of purely organic institutions'.¹²⁸⁶ In this sense, he differed from Carlyle, who treated the 'Constitution' with contempt, and tended to propose more radically utopian measures. Nevertheless, the guiding principles of the two men were the same. While both reserved a role for representative democracy, as a means to express the opinions of the population, both ultimately sought to vest authority in the wisest and most virtuous members of the community. For instance, in another part of the *Considerations*, Mill again entered into dialogue with Carlyle, writing: 'Representative assemblies are often taunted by their enemies with being places of mere talk and *bavardage*'. He then stated that such 'derision' was 'misplaced'. However, Mill then immediately conceded Carlyle's argument, writing:

Such "talking" would never be looked upon with disparagement... if assemblies knew and acknowledged that talking and discussion are their proper business, while *doing*, as the result of discussion, is the task not of a miscellaneous body, but of individuals specially trained to it... [namely,] those high public officers who really conduct the public business, or who appoint those by whom it is conducted.

¹²⁸⁴'Considerations on Representative Government', in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, 243-244.

¹²⁸⁵'Recent Writers on Reform', 64.

¹²⁸⁶*Autobiography* [1873], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 224-225.

In this sense, Parliament ought to be the place 'where the opinion which prevails in the nation makes itself manifest', and where 'statesmen' might ascertain 'what elements of opinion and power are growing, and what declining, and are enabled to shape their measures with some regard not solely to present exigencies, but to tendencies in progress'.¹²⁸⁷ In sum, Mill's argument was essentially the same as that which Carlyle had put forward in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, albeit framed within existing institutions. In the *Considerations*, Mill again advocated proportional representation, but now in conjunction with a graduated franchise. As he explained, if one man was 'superior' to another in 'knowledge', 'intelligence' or 'virtue', then one of the two, 'as the wiser or better man', had 'a claim to superior weight'. For Mill, this was 'the true ideal of representative government'.¹²⁸⁸

FINAL VOLUMES OF *FREDERICK*, EDINBURGH ADDRESS, 'SHOOTING NIAGARA' (1864-1867)

Having surveyed responses to the initial volumes of *Frederick the Great*, we now turn to Carlyle's final public pronouncements. As we have seen, the early volumes of *Frederick* had sought to portray Friedrich Wilhelm, the father of the eponymous Frederick, as a 'Captain of Industry'. In later volumes, the last of which appeared in 1865, Carlyle made clear that Frederick himself was 'not inferior to his Father in that respect', adding: 'Industrial matters, that of Colonies especially, of drainages, embankments, and reclaiming of waste lands, are a large item in the King's business, - readers would not guess how large, or how incessant'.¹²⁸⁹ Carlyle then elaborated, making his didactic purpose explicit:

Friedrich is full of these thoughts, among his other Industrialisms... A perennial business with him, this; which, even in the time of War, he never neglects; and which springs out like a stemmed flood, whenever Peace leaves him free for it. His labours by all methods to awaken new branches of industry, to cherish and further the old, are incessant, manifold, unwearied... One day, these things will deserve to be studied to the bottom; and to be set forth, by writing hands that are competent, for the instruction and example of Workers, - that is to say, of all men, Kings most of all, when there are again Kings... Those things might be didactic, truly, in various points, to this Generation.¹²⁹⁰

¹²⁸⁷'Considerations on Representative Government', 282-284.

¹²⁸⁸'Considerations on Representative Government', 334-337.

¹²⁸⁹*Frederick the Great*, VI:169, X:153.

¹²⁹⁰*Frederick the Great*, VI:222-228. On Frederick's 'industrial' reforms, see Florian Schui, *Early Debates About Industry: Voltaire and His Contemporaries* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), ch. 2.

In particular, Carlyle argued that contemporaries might learn from the way in which Frederick had addressed the problem of pauperism. Upon his accession to the throne in 1740, a 'continuous mode of management was set on foot for the Poor', and before long,

"One thousand poor old women, the destitute of Berlin, [were] set to spin," at his Majesty's charges; vacant houses, hired for them in certain streets and suburbs, have been new-planked, partitioned, warmed; and spinning is there for any diligent female soul. There a thousand of them sit, under proper officers, proper wages, treatment;—and the hum of their poor spindles, and of their poor inarticulate old hearts, is a comfort, if one chance to think of it.¹²⁹¹

Similarly, after the end of the Seven Years' War, Frederick distributed his 'remaining moneys' 'to the most necessitous', and his 'artillery-horses' were 'parted into plough-teams, and given to those who can otherwise get none', Carlyle remarking: 'Friedrich's procedures in this matter I believe to be little less didactic than those other, which are so celebrated in War'.¹²⁹² In sum, even more than thirty years after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle was still echoing their theories regarding the 'Captains of Industry' and the State. In this sense, the later volumes of *Frederick*, like earlier instalments, were less a glorification of militarism, than of work, and the direction of work. Two years later, in 'Shooting Niagara' (1867), Carlyle again returned to this theme, calling upon an 'Industrial noble' to 're-civilise, out of its now utter savagery, the world of Industry'. Moreover, he also reiterated his proposals for profit-sharing, arguing that one of the first tasks of said 'Industrial noble' would be 'to change *nomadic* contract into permanent'.¹²⁹³ Again, in making this point, Carlyle relied upon the Saint-Simonians' military analogy, stating:

one often wishes the entire Population could be thoroughly drilled into cooperative movement... This of outwardly combined and plainly consociated Discipline, in simultaneous movement and action, which may be practical, symbolical, artistic, mechanical in all degrees and modes, - is one of the noblest capabilities of man; and one he takes the greatest pleasure in exercising and unfolding, not to mention at all the invaluable benefit it would afford him if unfolded.¹²⁹⁴

¹²⁹¹*Frederick the Great*, IV:7-8.

¹²⁹²*Frederick the Great*, IX:252-253.

¹²⁹³'Shooting Niagara' [Aug. 1867], *CME* VII:219, 226.

¹²⁹⁴'Shooting Niagara', 233-236. See also *History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* [1858-1865], Copyright edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), I:293-295, V:6-8.

In this sense, the purpose of authority was to develop the faculties of individuals, and also to harmonise these faculties with each other, bringing them, to use Carlyle's phrase, 'into cooperative movement'. As has been seen, Carlyle, in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, had fused the Saint-Simonian military metaphor with Andrew Fletcher's ideas regarding citizen militias. In 'Shooting Niagara', Carlyle again advocated the training of all citizens to arms, while adding that this should only be done after they had been trained to work. He wrote:

Assuredly I would not neglect the Fighting purpose; no, from sixteen to sixty, not a son of mine but should know the Soldier's function too, and be able to defend his native soil and self, in best perfection, when need came. But I should not begin with this; I should carefully end with this, after careful travel in innumerable fruitful fields by the way leading to this.¹²⁹⁵

Moreover, Carlyle also argued that the 'glory of a workman' was that 'he does his work well', and that this 'ought to be his most precious possession, like the honour of a soldier, dearer to him than life'.¹²⁹⁶ It is surely no coincidence that, the previous year, in an address delivered to students at the University of Edinburgh, Carlyle had advised his audience to peruse the works of Adam Ferguson, whom, he told them, was 'well worth reading on Roman history' (most likely a reference to Ferguson's *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* [1783]). In particular, Carlyle added, Ferguson made clear the extent to which the Romans valued 'courage', to which they 'gave the name of virtue, manhood, as the one thing ennobling to a man'.¹²⁹⁷ As Ian McDaniel has recently shown, Ferguson had advocated the establishment of a meritocratic citizen militia, not only as a means to inculcate the martial virtues, but also as a means to create a new public service elite. Thus, Ferguson, like Fletcher before him, was not only a Scot, but also a firm believer in the citizen militia.¹²⁹⁸ In the course of this address, Carlyle made one other statement that adds further credence to the claim that his proposals for the Organisation of Labour were not intended as a means to higher wages or material abundance. He advised the students:

If the man gets meat and clothes, what matters it whether he have £10,000, or £10,000,000,

¹²⁹⁵'Shooting Niagara', 236.

¹²⁹⁶'Shooting Niagara', 229-230.

¹²⁹⁷*On the Choice of Books: An Address Delivered to the Students of the University of Edinburgh, April 2, 1866* (London: George & Harrap, n.d.), 12.

¹²⁹⁸According to Ferguson, this militia would thus provide a counterweight to the market and inequalities of property, while also acting as an institutional safeguard against the corruption of popular democracy. See John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 402, and Iain McDaniel, *Adam Ferguson in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Roman Past and Europe's Future* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 155-156, 177-179.

or £70 a year. He can get meat and clothes for that; and he will find very little difference intrinsically, if he is a wise man.¹²⁹⁹

Indeed, as noted above, such opinions were in keeping with the Stoic belief that material things were relatively 'indifferent' to the good life, which consisted rather in moral integrity and autonomy. Thus, it seems, Carlyle intended the Organisation of Labour more as a means to the moral development of individuals, and to the maintenance of a cohesive policy.

In these final writings, Carlyle also reiterated his earlier opinions regarding authority. Again, these were in keeping with an older aristocratic republican tradition, in which the wisest and most virtuous citizens were to be raised to the helm of the community, there to govern for the common good. Furthermore, Carlyle, as in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, suggested that these leading citizens should still be subject to the rule of law, and to some measure of popular consultation and constraint. For instance, in *Frederick*, Carlyle explained how, while Frederick did not reassemble 'the old *Stände*', he did appoint 'a Permanent Committee' in 'each Province', responsible for 'all Provincial matters, from roads and bridges upwards'. These committees were not elected, but they did serve to relay the popular will, being an 'effective non-haranguing Parliament, to the King's Deputy in every such Province; well calculated to illuminate and forward his subaltern *Amtmen* and him'.¹³⁰⁰ An even more telling reference to the aristocratic republican tradition occurred in the address delivered at Edinburgh. As noted above, Carlyle had recommended Adam Ferguson's *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* (1783) to his audience. Here, Ferguson had praised the Roman statesman Sulla for having temporarily assumed the office of dictator, and for having enacted a series of reforms to the Republic's constitution.¹³⁰¹ Moreover, Carlyle also told his listeners:

Machiavelli... says of the Romans that they continued a long time, but it was purely in virtue of this item in their constitution; namely, that they had all the conviction in their minds that it was solemnly necessary at times to appoint a Dictator... who degraded men out of their places, ordered them to execution, and did whatever seemed to him good... He was commanded to take care that the Republic suffered no detriment.¹³⁰²

¹²⁹⁹*On the Choice of Books*, 91.

¹³⁰⁰*Frederick the Great*, IV:29-31.

¹³⁰¹See McDaniel, *Adam Ferguson*, 61. In the *History*, Ferguson also argued that "kingly government", or the "wisdom and direction of a single person", maintained justice far more effectively than "any system of public councils or popular assemblies" (cited in *ibid.*, 147-148).

¹³⁰²*On the Choice of Books*, 16-17.

This seems to have been a reference to the first book of Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, and particularly to a chapter entitled 'Dictatorial Authority Did Good, Not Harm, to the Roman Republic'. Here, Machiavelli explained:

the dictatorship, as long as it was bestowed in accord with the public laws and not by private authority, always benefited the city, because it is the creation of the magistrates and the granting of power by extraordinary means which harm republics, not those which are created by ordinary means: this is clear from what happened in Rome over a long period of time, during which no dictator ever did anything but good for the republic... the dictator was named for a fixed period and not in perpetuity, and only to deal with the problem that caused him to be appointed; the dictator's authority included the power to decide by himself on the remedies against the urgent danger, to undertake everything without consultations, and to punish anyone without appeal, but he could do nothing to curtail the government, such as taking authority away from the senate or from the people, or abolishing the city's old institutions and creating new ones.¹³⁰³

Thus, as has already been noted above, Carlyle advocated not 'despotism' (despite the claims of many hostile reviewers), but rather dictatorship, in accordance with the republican theory of the state. The following year, in 'Shooting Niagara', Carlyle called for the emergence of a 'small nucleus of Invincible Ἀριστοι fighting for the Good Cause, in their various wisest ways, adding: 'This is the question of questions, on which it all turns'.¹³⁰⁴ Again, the use of the ancient Greek term is significant, providing further proof of the classical roots of Carlyle's arguments. Moreover, Carlyle continued to argue that authority ought to serve as a means to the improvement of those subject to it, stating that these Ἀριστοι would have to take in hand every 'bad man', and 'persuade', 'urge', 'induce', or 'compel' him 'into something of well-doing'.¹³⁰⁵ However, Carlyle's preference seemed to be for persuasion rather than coercion, and moral authority over brute force. As he told William Allingham in 1872: 'work by compulsion is little good. You must carry man's volition along with you if you are to command to any purpose'.¹³⁰⁶

1303Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. J. Conway Bondanella and P. Bondanella, Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 94-96.

1304'Shooting Niagara', 218.

1305'Shooting Niagara', 206.

1306Entry for 22nd Apr. 1872, William Allingham, *A Diary*, ed. H. Allingham and D. Radford (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1886), 209.

HOSTILE REVIEWS

As had been the case with earlier volumes, reviewers of these final instalments of *Frederick* often accused Carlyle of advocating despotism. For instance, a contributor to the *Saturday Review* wrote: 'Hanbury, the English Minister at Berlin, naturally thought the government rather tyrannical, and described the country as "one huge prison." Nothing could delight Mr. Carlyle more. This is exactly what he likes'.¹³⁰⁷ Similarly, another reviewer, writing in the *North British Review*, declared: 'Mr. Carlyle has failed in his attempt to raise up Frederic into a model of every kingly excellence; and in his more dangerous endeavour to glorify despotism at the expense of constitutional government'.¹³⁰⁸ However, this particular reviewer also recognised the classical roots of Carlyle's argument, continuing:

Let us be ruled by "heroes" and all will be well. Now this high-sounding theory, whatever its merits, is by no means new. It is at least as old as Plato. Indeed it is a necessary result of speculations, which consider politics in an ethical point of view, which mix up politics with ethics. Plato's ideal statesman, as developed in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, is a minute and despotic teacher or trainer, fashioning all men after the pattern he thinks best. In his state only hero-philosophers are to bear sway. A chosen few have been gifted with that gold beyond price, which gives them the right to guide and govern men. On these few nature has bestowed the sad privilege of ruling, on others she imposes the obligation of obedience (*Rep.* V 474).

The implication here was that Carlyle, and indeed Plato, erred in conflating politics and ethics, i.e. in believing that political authority ought to be distributed on the basis of virtue, and ought to aim at the moral improvement of those subject to it. However, according to the reviewer, while Carlyle preached 'the duty of obedience to these rulers when they appear', he gave 'no hint of how we are to get them'. This, the reviewer concluded, was the decisive flaw in Carlyle's argument.¹³⁰⁹

THE LATER MILL AND THE ORGANISATION OF LABOUR (1865-1873)

As has been seen in a previous section, Mill, particularly in the *Considerations on Representative Government*, had expressed highly similar opinions to Carlyle regarding the nature of authority.

¹³⁰⁷'Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*', in *The Saturday Review* (2nd Apr. 1864), 414-415 (414-415).

¹³⁰⁸'Carlyle's *History of Frederic the Great*', in *The North British Review*, 43 (1865), 79-126 (124).

¹³⁰⁹'Carlyle's *History of Frederic the Great*', in *The North British Review*, 43 (1865), 79-126 (117-119).

Four years later, in *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), Mill also envisioned the organisation of labour in much the same terms as Carlyle. Here, Mill emphasised the desirability of co-operation between employers and employees, also making use of the Saint-Simonians' military metaphor. He wrote:

What M. Comte really means is that we should regard working for the benefit of others as a good in itself; that we should desire it for its own sake, and not for the sake of remuneration... To this opinion we entirely subscribe. The rough method of settling the labourer's share of the produce, the competition of the market, may represent a practical necessity, but certainly not... the true moral and social idea of Labour... Until labourers and employers perform the work of industry in the spirit in which soldiers perform that of an army, industry will never be moralized, and military life will remain, what, in spite of the anti-social character of its direct object, it has hitherto been - the chief school of moral co-operation.¹³¹⁰

Here, Mill's ideal was highly similar to that of Carlyle. Several years later, in his *Autobiography* (1873), Mill recalled his enthusiasm for the the 'scheme gradually unfolded by the St. Simonians, under which the labour and capital of society would be managed for the general account of the community, every individual being required to take a share of labour, either as thinker, teacher, artist, or producer, all being classed according to their capacity, and remunerated according to their works'.¹³¹¹ Later in the same work, he stated that he and Harriet Taylor's

ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond Democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists... We saw clearly that to render any such social transformation either possible or desirable, an equivalent change of character must take place both in the uncultivated herd who now compose the labouring masses, and in the immense majority of their employers. Both these classes must learn by practice to labour and combine for generous, or at all events for public and social purposes, and not, as hitherto, solely for narrowly interested ones. But the capacity to do this has always existed in mankind, and is not, nor is ever likely to be, extinct. Education, habit, and the cultivation of the sentiments will make a common man dig or weave for his country, as readily as fight for his country.¹³¹²

¹³¹⁰*Auguste Comte and Positivism*, 148-149.

¹³¹¹*Autobiography*, 137-142.

¹³¹²*Autobiography*, 195-197.

Thus, in his later writings, Mill continued to express many of the same ideas as Carlyle regarding a new 'organic' era, and the 'Organisation of Labour', also making use of the same metaphor. Moreover, like Carlyle, Mill also had recourse to the language of the common good, arguing that this ought to be placed above a selfish desire for wages. As the final section will argue, Carlyle's ideas regarding the 'Organisation of Labour', having already found an echo amongst Owenites, Chartists, and Christian Socialists at mid-century, later attained the status of commonplace within the Co-operative movement.

CO-OPERATORS ON CARLYLE (1857-1879)

In their review of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1850, Marx and Engels had heaped scorn on Carlyle's opinions regarding the 'Captains of Industry'. As Marx and Engels put it, 'after forty pages' of invective against 'egotism', 'free competition' and 'laissez-faire', Carlyle had proceeded to celebrate the 'industrial bourgeoisie', the 'main perpetrators of these shams', as 'heroes'.¹³¹³ The following year, similar strictures were expressed by J. G. Eccarius, an ally of Marx and Engels, in *The Friend of the People*, a journal edited by the Chartist leader George Julian Harney. Referring to Carlyle's theory of the 'Captains of Industry', Eccarius wrote that all attempts 'to bring the working class back under the control of the rich' would be 'in vain'.¹³¹⁴ Indeed, this line of argument has been echoed by more recent Marxists. Philip Rosenberg, for instance, deplores 'Carlyle's thoroughly misplaced faith in the ability of the so-called Captains of Industry to lead England to a new social order', adding: 'The persistence with which he repeated these outdated St. Simonian doctrines may be an early indication of the drying up of his creative powers'.¹³¹⁵ However, such judgements might well have sprung more from Marxist theory than from the realm of practical experience. Indeed, as the rest of this section will suggest, other socialists and reformers, particularly those engaged in practical attempts at the 'Organisation of Labour', did not consider Carlyle's doctrines regarding the 'Captains of Industry' to be altogether absurd.

¹³¹³Marx and Engels, Review of 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung, politische-ökonomische Revue*, 4 (4th Apr. 1850), 17-30 (27).

¹³¹⁴J. G. Eccarius, 'The Discernment of a Manchester School Philosopher', in *The Friend of the People*, ed. G. Julian Harney, no. 10 (15th Feb. 1851), 74-75. At the end of 1848, Eccarius had helped to re-establish the Central Authority of the Communist League in London (Christine Lattek, *Revolutionary Refugees: German Socialism in Britain, 1840-1860* [London and New York: Routledge, 2006], 46). He also contributed to Marx and Engels' *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

¹³¹⁵Philip Rosenberg, *The Seventh Hero: Thomas Carlyle and the Theory of Radical Activism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 163-165.

In 1857, George Jacob Holyoake, a former Owenite and pioneer co-operator, published his *History of Cooperation in Rochdale*. Here, he wrote:

“This that they call organisation of labour, is, if well understood, the problem of the whole future, from all who would in future govern man”. Thus wrote Thomas Carlyle... When, a few years ago, Mr. Carlyle began, with his noble insight, to write of 'Captains of Industry,' he was considered to have visions of the most hopeless class of chieftains ever pictured in romances. But his ideas, grafted on the age, have taken root. Modern employers, if they wished, might found chieftainships, nobler far than those of feudal days, and will, no doubt, do it yet. The Crossleys, Akroyds, and Salts of the north, are already taking proud places in the industrial history of the people.¹³¹⁶

Thus, despite the derision of Marx and his followers, Holyoake clearly did not believe the prospect of cooperation between 'Captains of Industry' and their employees to be altogether a chimera. Moreover, in the same chapter of the book, Holyoake also echoed Carlyle's use of the Saint-Simonian military metaphor, arguing that such fighting spirit was essential to the success of Co-operation. He explained:

the thing might be done if a number of the working class could be got to act together, and *keep together*, for this end. It requires to convert a number of them to a clear view of their own personal interest, to be promoted in no other way, and a deep sense of duty towards their order, whose character is elevated by such successes... Unless a man be wise enough to choose a side and discharge its obligations as a sacred duty, undertakes to win others to act in concert with him and pursue his object with the fidelity of a soldier, nothing can be depended upon.¹³¹⁷

Three years later, in 1860, another Co-operator, Christopher West, also adduced Carlyle's writings in support of Co-operation. Writing in the *Bradfordian*, West claimed that 'the principle of co-operation is becoming generally acknowledged amongst us, as one of the characteristic principles of our times'. He then referred to the writings of Carlyle, concluding:

His aristocracy of mind, or rather will, would be a mere phantasm without the conditions he

¹³¹⁶George Jacob Holyoake, *Self-Help by the People: The History of Cooperation in Rochdale*, 'Part I. 1844-1857' [1857], 6th ed. (London: London Book Store, 1867), 54, 59-60, 62-63.

¹³¹⁷*Ibid.*, 54, 59-60, 62-63.

has associated with it. In that ideal world suggested by him, the position of the master spirit of his times is that of the mover, the controller, the regulator of all the phenomena of the life political – he is to work with others, through others, by others, or in other words, he is to co-operate with his fellow-men, only himself ought to be the head.¹³¹⁸

Thus, in the case of both Holyoake and West, Carlyle's faith in the authority of the 'Captains of Industry' was considered to be compatible with, rather than contradictory to, a belief in working-class co-operation. Seven years later, in 1867, Thomas Dixon, a Sunderland Co-operator, wrote to John Ruskin:

I myself am not fully satisfied with our co-operation, and never have been; it is too much tinged with the very elements that they complain of in our present systems of trade – selfishness. I have for years been trying to direct the attention of the editor of the *Co-operator* to such evils that I see in it. Now, further, I may state that I find you and Carlyle seem to agree quite on the idea of the Masterhood qualification. There, again, I find you both feel and write as all working men consider just. I can assure you there is not an honest, noble, working man that would not by far serve under such master-hood, than be the employée [sic] or workman of a co-operative store. Working men do not as a rule make good masters; neither do they treat each other with that courtesy as a noble master treats his working man.¹³¹⁹

Thus, for Dixon, it seems, there was no necessary opposition between 'Masterhood' and 'Co-operation'; to the contrary, the two might be complementary rather than contradictory.

Two years later, in 1869, similar sentiments were expressed by the former Owenite Charles Bray (whom we have already encountered), in an article published in the *Co-operator*, entitled 'Co-operation, the Creator of Identity of Interest between Labour and Capital'. Here, Bray echoed the call that Carlyle had made in *Past and Present* for employers to grant their workers a share in their profits. He then added: 'The present relations between capital and labour are simply chaotic; and what Carlyle said 30 years ago remains still true, namely – that the great question of the nineteenth century is the organisation of industry'. Moreover, Bray continued, the 'association of labourers with

¹³¹⁸Christopher West, 'On Co-Operation', in *The Bradfordian* (1st Nov. 1860), 28-29.

¹³¹⁹Thomas Dixon to John Ruskin, Sunderland, 7th Feb 1867, in Ruskin, *Time and Tide, By Weare and Tyne: Twenty-Five Letters to a Working Man of Sunderland on the Laws of Work* [1867] (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1869), 198-199.

capitalists' was far from a chimera. 'This system', he explained, 'has already been adopted in one or two manufacturing establishments in the north of England; and to a greater extent in France, and some other Continental countries'. However, according to Bray, such association was only 'provisional', serving as a first step to 'the association of the labourers themselves, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on operations, and working under managers of their own appointing'. 'The effect of this change', Bray wrote,

is well described by Mr. John Stuart Mill: - "It is scarcely possible to rate too highly this material benefit, which is as nothing compared with the moral revolution in society that would accompany it; the healing of the standing feud between capital and labour; the transformation of human life from a conflict of classes struggling for opposite interests, to a friendly rivalry in the pursuit of a good common to all; the elevation of the dignity of labour; a new sense of security and independence in the labouring class; and the conversion of each human being's daily occupation into a school of the social sympathies and practical intelligence."¹³²⁰

Bray here touched upon the tension in Carlyle's writings already referred to above. If, as Carlyle had argued, authority served as means to the improvement, and eventual emancipation, of those subject to it, might it not lay the basis for some more democratic form of co-operative venture? Bray, citing Mill in his support, evidently believed that it might. However, regardless of such differences of emphasis, Bray clearly recognised that both Carlyle and Mill were getting at broadly the same point, namely, that labour would in the future be conducted, more and more, on a co-operative basis. Moreover, even if Bray regarded the 'association of labourers with capitalists' as a provisional arrangement, leading to 'the association of the labourers themselves', he nonetheless endorsed co-operative ventures initiated by individual Captains of Industry as a step in the right direction. Thus, like Dixon, Bray believed that Captains of Industry were making, and might continue to make, a useful contribution to the progress of Co-operation. Two years later, in his *Manual of Anthropology* (1871), Bray took a slightly different tack, emphasising the initiative not of Captains of Industry, but rather of 'Government'. First, Bray again cited Carlyle, in the following terms:

Thomas Carlyle... says: "All human interests, combined human endeavours, and social

¹³²⁰Co-operation, the Creator of Identity of Interest between Labour and Capital' (reprinted from the *Coventry Herald*), in *The Co-operator. A Weekly Record of Co-operative Progress*, no. 211 (14th Aug. 1869), 582-583.

growths in this world, have at a certain stage of their development required organisation; and work, the grandest of human interests, does now require it.” “This that they call 'Organisation of Labour,' is, if well understood, the problem of the whole future, for all who would in future pretend to govern men”¹³²¹

Bray then took a distinctly authoritarian direction, stating that 'very few' of the 'wage-class' possessed those qualities necessary to successful Co-operation. The latter, Bray argued, would thus 'require a great educational change, and a moral and intellectual advance, that very few [workers] have at present made'. According to Bray, the solution to this problem lay in 'Government'. He explained:

Government might greatly aid in facilitating this change, as the great majority of mankind are very timid, have few convictions of their own, are perfectly willing to follow, and, in fact, almost require to lean on persons in authority; but it must be a Government for the people, and not, as hitherto, for a class – a Government in which the interests of labour shall be as carefully considered and protected as the interests of capital have hitherto been.¹³²²

Thus, having already endorsed the authority of individual Captains of Industry, on the condition it be exercised for the common good, Bray now endorsed the authority of 'Government', provided it met the same condition. Moreover, in the *Co-operator*, Bray explained that the 'great educational change' would be primarily moral. He wrote:

Co-operation... in its widest sense, can only be based upon an education very superior to that now possessed by the great mass of mankind. I do not mean an education of the intellect alone, such as would fit a man to pass an examination for the Civil Service; but that kind of education which shall train a man to self-denial, fortitude, self-reliance, unselfishness, and that moral honesty that seeks the right and the true, regardless of consequences, and is always ready to sacrifice a small present good to a greater in the future, and our own individual interest to that of the community. But if this highest kind of education is necessary to the success of Co-operation, so, in the efforts towards a more perfect Co-operation, will this education be found.¹³²³

¹³²¹Charles Bray, *A Manual of Anthropology, or Science of Man, Based on Modern Research* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1871), 268-270.

¹³²²Bray, *A Manual of Anthropology*, 292-293.

¹³²³'The London Co-operative Congress. Second Day', in *The Co-operator. A Weekly Record of Co-operative Progress*, no. 203 (19th June 1869), 436-438. Bray again cited Carlyle, to the effect that: “This that they call 'Organisation of

Indeed, for Bray, the cultivation of such virtues was far more important than the attainment of material abundance. As he explained, one of the main 'evils' of the private ownership of property was that it promoted the 'diversion of the industry of the country to the production of useless and even of pernicious luxuries', as well as a 'false style and standard of living'. In this sense, instead of aiming to find out 'how much we could live upon', political economists ought to dedicate themselves to finding out 'how little'. For Bray, Co-operation was thus valuable not as a means to higher wages or levels of consumption, but as an 'antidote to our great moral backslidings, which to our shame and loss, are fast becoming national'.¹³²⁴

A final example of Carlyle's enduring influence upon the Co-operative movement is provided by the second volume of G. J. Holyoake's *The History of Co-operation in England* (1879). As we have seen, during the 1850s, Holyoake had endorsed Carlyle's vision of the 'Captains of Industry', arguing that many employers had already begun to grant workers a share in their enterprises. Twenty years later, Holyoake made broadly the same point, making a distinction between 'informal' and 'direct' 'Industrial Partnerships':

[in] an industrial partnership [Holyoake wrote,]... the employer shares a portion of his profits with his workpeople, who contract on their part to render an equivalent in zeal and skill... In some cases employers pay the largest wages they are able from pure good will to their man, or provide news-rooms, or dining-rooms, or schools for their children, or provide them with good habitations at low rents, or pension old workmen, or contribute to Provident or other Societies for their personal advantage. Such employers do virtually establish an industrial partnership, though not in a formal way. A direct industrial partnership in which the workmen calculate upon a certain dividend of profits in addition to their wages, could only be carried out where the employer himself has the time and disposition to act as a "Captain of Industry" (to use Carlyle's phrase) and establish personal relations with his workpeople.¹³²⁵

Labour,' is, if well understood, the problem of the whole future, for all who would in future pretend to govern men".

¹³²⁴The London Co-operative Congress. Second Day', in *The Co-operator. A Weekly Record of Co-operative Progress*, no. 203 (19th June 1869), 436-438. Bray also referred to Carlyle in his *Phases of Opinion and Experience During a Long Life* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884). Here, Bray wrote: 'Compare 1873, the height of the upward movement, with January, 1879, when all the world seems out of work... Surely something is wrong, and work, "the grandest of all human interests," as Carlyle says, "now requires organising; that this they call 'organisation of labour' is the problem of the whole future for all who would in future pretend to govern men.'" (131-132).

¹³²⁵George Jacob Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England: Its Literature and Its Advocates*, Vol. II, 'The Constructive Period – 1845-1878' (London: Trübner & Co., 1879), 231-232.

Thus, while Holyoake made clear that the realisation of Carlyle's vision depended upon the willingness of individual employers, he also believed this was not beyond the bounds of possibility. Indeed, Holyoake then gave a practical example of such efforts at 'industrial partnership', writing:

In Leicester, at a "Treat" given by Messrs. W. Corah & Sons, hosiery manufacturers, to 450 of their work people, one of the Firm said: "Masters were making profits and it was nothing but right that those who worked for them should enjoy as far as possible their share of the profits (cheers). He took it that there were respective duties for employers."

'In the same town', Holyoake continued, 'there are other employers who equally exemplify the sense of industrial equity'.¹³²⁶ Moreover, as Carlyle had argued in *Past and Present*, Holyoake made clear that such endeavours were not acts of charity by employers towards their workers. To the contrary, they would be of mutual advantage to both parties. Under ordinary circumstances, Holyoake explained, a 'workman' had 'no interest in the business, beyond his stipulated wages'. For this reason, he would adopt 'the easiest processes', care 'nothing to economise material', take 'small pride in his work', and show 'little concern for the reputation or fortune of the firm'. Moreover, if offered a higher wage by another employer, he would immediately take it, thus 'leaving his master to supply his place as he may by a strange hand, who loses time in familiarising himself with the arrangements of a workshop new to him, or blunders, or destroys property for the want of special local experience'. If unable to obtain a higher wage elsewhere, the worker would simply go on 'strike', thus endangering 'the business of his master'. In this sense, according to Holyoake, wanton greed and exploitation did not pay, least of all for employers. In contrast, he argued, an 'industrial partnership' would allow an employer to buy 'the skill and will of a man – his genius and his self-respect'. This, Holyoake emphasised, was 'but a better business arrangement'.¹³²⁷ However, as Holyoake then made clear, 'industrial partnership' was also a lot more besides. In particular, it served to raise the moral character of both workers and employers, binding them together in pursuit of a common good. Holyoake explained:

every manufacturer, and every landowner who makes overtures of industrial partnership to his men, raises the character of mastership and proprietorship... the whole temper of industry is being changed by these overtures; the mighty doors of conciliation and equality are being

¹³²⁶Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:236-237.

¹³²⁷Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:237-239.

opened, through which, one day, all the workmen of England will pass... When these Utopian ideas were first revived in industrial circles men thought they were the mere flashes of lightening which play upon the fringe of a coming tempest. They be rather compared to the rainbow arch which denotes a permanent truce between the warring elements, a sign that the storm is passing away.¹³²⁸

In sum, Holyoake saw nothing utopian in Carlyle's vision of 'Captains of Industry', arguing that it was already being realised. Moreover, like Carlyle, Holyoake attached particular importance to the transformation of the workplace into an ethical community, and the improving effects this would have on the moral character of both workers and employers.

Indeed, similar arguments surfaced in another chapter of Holyoake's *History*, dealing with 'Distribution' and the 'Co-operative Store'. Holyoake began the chapter with the following quotation from the American journalist Horace Greeley:

“Co-operation is the true goal of our industrial progress, the application of the republican principle to Labour, and the appointed means of rescuing the Labouring Class from dependence, dissipation, prodigality, and need, and establishing it on a basis of forecast, calculation, sobriety, and thrift, conducive at once to its material comfort, its intellectual culture and moral elevation.”¹³²⁹

Moreover, on the same page, Holyoake then invoked Carlyle, referring to 'the organization of Industry which Carlyle has desired and Louis Blanc has advocated'.¹³³⁰ He then went on to describe the way in which Co-operative stores were ordinarily established. In doing so, Holyoake relied upon a language which bore more than a passing resemblance to the aristocratic republicanism of Carlyle. For instance, according to Holyoake, Co-operative stores were generally founded by 'two or three persons', since 'in this world two or three persons always do everything'. Moreover, Holyoake continued, these 'two or three persons' would have to use a combination of persuasion and coercion in dealing with the other members of the store. While some might 'have the right feeling, good sense, and punctuality' to pay their subscription on time, others, who had 'no methodical habits, and no sense of punctuality', would have to 'be looked well after'. Indeed, as the experience of 'building and friendly societies' suggested, 'fines' would 'have to be resorted to, to compel members to do

¹³²⁸Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:241-242.

¹³²⁹Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:89.

¹³³⁰Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:89.

what they engage to do, and what it is their interest to do'.¹³³¹ Holyoake then wrote:

A true Co-operator has three qualities – good sense, good temper, and a good will. Most people have one or the other quality, but a true Co-operator has all three: “good sense,” to dispose him to make the most of his means; “good temper,” to enable him to associate with others; “good will,” to incline him to serve others, and to be at trouble to serve them, and to go on serving them, whether they are grateful or not in return, caring only to know that he does good, and finding it a sufficient reward to see that others are benefited through his unsolicited, unthanked, unrequited exertions – which always get appreciated sooner or later – generally later.¹³³²

In sum, it seems that Holyoake here extended the aristocratic republican language of Carlyle, from the 'Captains of Industry' to the leading members of Co-operative stores.

CONCLUSION

As noted in the course of this chapter, hostile reviewers, particularly around the time of the 1848 revolutions, had accused Carlyle of being a destructive, rather than a constructive thinker. Following his death in 1881, such accusations were echoed in a number of obituaries. For instance, the *Times* argued that 'Mr. Carlyle found it much easier to rail at large than to suggest any working substitutes for the systems he despised', adding that whatever reforms he did propose were 'preposterous and impracticable'.¹³³³ Similarly, the *Spectator* claimed that Carlyle 'was ever more disposed to sympathise with the great organs of destruction, than with those of constructive force'.¹³³⁴ However, as the above discussion of Carlyle's ideas regarding the 'Organisation of Labour' has suggested, such accusations were far from the truth. Five years later, in 1886, Carlyle's friend Henry Larkin came to his defence, arguing that Carlyle, far from being 'a mere puller-down', had had 'one of the grandest dreams of social building-up that ever kindled a prophetic imagination'.¹³³⁵ Continuing, Larkin explained:

We might almost say [Carlyle's] one ethical aim was to restore our reverence for faithful work, and for well-organised faithful service. What is, or can be, that 'Organisation of

¹³³¹Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:101-102.

¹³³²Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England*, II:104.

¹³³³Obituary in *Times* (11th Feb. 1881), 5.

¹³³⁴Obituary in *Spectator*, (12th Feb. 1881), 214-215.

¹³³⁵Henry Larkin, *Carlyle and the Open Secret of His Life* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1886), 2, 108.

Labour' which he so constantly speaks of as the great problem of the future, but a wisely regulated organisation of faithful and Honourable Servitude? ¹³³⁶

According to Larkin, Carlyle's purpose had been to 'bind class and class together in bonds of mutual helpfulness, and of heartfelt devotion to a Common-Weal'. He then added:

Of course all this will be at once stigmatised as 'mere Socialism'; and, if every effort for mutual helpfulness and individual devotion to the common good is what we are to understand as being 'socialistic' let the stigma remain, for this is the one indispensable condition of social existence and of all social greatness. ¹³³⁷

Indeed, Carlyle's ideas had already found a sympathetic audience among Chartists, Owenites, and Co-Operators, and had thus made an important contribution to the development of early British socialism. Moreover, as the epilogue to this thesis will suggest, Carlyle's concept of the 'Organisation of Labour', and his vision of an aristocratic, industrial republic, bound together in an ethos of work, would also make a significant contribution to the platform of the early Labour movement later in the nineteenth century.

Following the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle had envisaged an 'Organisation of Labour' on quasi-military lines, an idea he later combined with Andrew Fletcher and Adam Ferguson's proposals for a meritocratic, hierarchical, citizen militia. As this military analogy implied, Carlyle's vision was clearly authoritarian. However, it was not necessarily despotic or tyrannical. As has been suggested, Carlyle stood in a well-established tradition of aristocratic republicanism, according to which the wisest and most virtuous citizens ought to govern for the good of the community as a whole, while remaining under the rule of law, and being subject to some degree of popular scrutiny. Considering the 'Condition-of-England question' a national emergency, Carlyle also at times called for the appointment of a temporary dictator, an idea that stretched back to ancient Rome. Moreover, as has been noted, there was a running tension in Carlyle's thought between authority and emancipation. In particular, Carlyle implied that authority, in order to be legitimate, ought to serve as a means to the moral improvement (that, is to the self-mastery) of those subject to it, ultimately leading to their emancipation, and reintegration into the community as free and independent citizens. In this sense, despite his superheated rhetoric, the substance of Carlyle's arguments was perhaps not all that

¹³³⁶Ibid., 262.

¹³³⁷Ibid., 267-270.

different from John Stuart Mill's 'sovereignty enhancing concept of paternalism'.¹³³⁸ In sum, for Carlyle, the 'Organisation of Labour' was intended not as a means to higher wages or material abundance,¹³³⁹ but rather as a framework in which every citizen would be able to 'stand on' his 'own feet' by his 'own industrious toil'.¹³⁴⁰ As the following chapter will show, Carlyle also transposed this vision onto a world-scale, particularly in his proposals for a 'united British Empire'.

¹³³⁸Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism*, 16.

¹³³⁹C.f. Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium*, 155-156, 'By the time the communitarian side of Owenism had reached the point of total collapse, the stoic and puritan notions of restricted needs which had animated the early theorists of community had been largely pushed aside... increasingly replaced by a conception of socialism as a regime of complete abundance'. Carlyle might thus constitute an exception to this general tendency.

¹³⁴⁰TC to Alexander Carlyle, 3rd Mar. 1846, *CL* 20:132, op. cit. In an obituary of Carlyle written in 1881, Leslie Stephen claimed that the latter had evinced 'the absolute self-respect and independence of a man who scorns to owe success to anything but the intrinsic merit of good work' (in *Cornhill Magazine*, XLIII [Mar. 1881], 354).

'The grand Industrial task of conquering this Terraqueous Planet':

From *association universelle* to 'the united British Empire'

INTRODUCTION

Previous assessments of Carlyle's imperial thought have focussed almost exclusively upon his ideas regarding the Irish, particularly as expressed in 'Chartism' (1839), as well as upon a notorious article entitled 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', published in *Fraser's Magazine* in December 1849.¹³⁴¹ Moreover, scholarly debate around these two issues has been overwhelmingly dominated by the question of whether Carlyle was or was not a 'racist'. On one side, sympathetic biographers, along with other 'Carlyle scholars', have vehemently denied this charge, seeking to exonerate Carlyle of any hint of 'racial prejudice'.¹³⁴² In opposition, a number of hostile commentators, particularly scholars working from a 'post-colonial' perspective, have insisted that Carlyle was not only a 'racist', but perhaps *the* leading 'racist' of the Victorian era. Catherine Hall, for instance, has described Carlyle's article on the 'Negro Question' as 'a discursive break with the hegemony of universalism', heralding in 'a conservative, ethnocentric, and racist conception of Englishness', while David Theo Goldberg has associated Carlyle with 'colonialism's vicious recourse to neo-scientific racism'.¹³⁴³ Against the background of this rather polarised debate, both

¹³⁴¹One noteworthy exception to this rule is T. Peter Park, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Jews', in *Journal of European Studies*, 20:1 (1990), 1-21.

¹³⁴²Ian Campbell, 'Carlyle and the Negro Question Again', in *Criticism: a Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 13:3 (1971), 279-290; Gillian Workman, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy: An Account with Some New Material', in *Victorian Studies*, 18:1 (1974), 77-102; Fred Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 489; Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), 276.

¹³⁴³Catherine Hall, 'The Economy of Intellectual Prestige: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, and the Case of Governor Eyre', in *Cultural Critique*, 12 (1989), 178-181, 189, 194, 196, and idem., *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 378-379; David Theo Goldberg, 'Liberalism's limits: Carlyle and Mill on "the negro question"', in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 22:2 (2000), 204-205, 208, 214 (Goldberg further bemoans Carlyle's use of 'objectionable language'). Jude V. Nixon works himself into a righteous fury in 'Racialism and the Politics of Emancipation in Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question"', in *Carlyle Studies Annual*, 16 (1996), 89-108. For her part, Amrita Ghosh claims that Carlyle was a proponent of biological racism, his ideas (apparently) being 'derived' from 'phrenology' and 'nascent Darwinian theories' ('Carlyle, Mill, Bodington and the Case of 19th Century Imperialized Space', in *Journal of Philosophy*, 4:9 [2009], 26, 29). Other noteworthy examples include Amy Martin, 'Blood Transfusions: Constructions of Irish Racial Difference, the English Working Class, and Revolutionary Possibility in the Work of Carlyle and Engels', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32:1 (2004), 83-102, and David Nally, 'Eternity's commissioner': Thomas Carlyle, the Great

Julie M. Dugger and John Morrow have recently re-examined Carlyle's writings on Ireland, particularly during the 1840s, adopting a far more nuanced, historical approach to the issue, and thus arriving at far more balanced conclusions. According to both Dugger and Morrow, while Carlyle certainly employed the language of race in relation to the Irish, this was not as central to his analysis as has sometimes been claimed, and was accompanied by a stress on the role of socio-economic conditions in the formation of national character, as well as a potentially universal concept of 'progress'.¹³⁴⁴ However, in another recent work, Morrow has insisted that the same cannot be said regarding Carlyle's attitude towards 'blacks', particularly in the 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question'. According to Morrow, Carlyle clearly believed that 'blacks' were 'inherently inferior to whites in intellect and moral character', and that this 'inferiority' was 'racially determined'.¹³⁴⁵

In my opinion, the secondary literature outlined above suffers from three main shortcomings. First, a narrow focus on the questions of 'race' and 'racism', as expressed in a limited selection of texts, has resulted in an almost entire disregard of the rest of Carlyle's imperial thought, as developed in his wider oeuvre.¹³⁴⁶ Second, whether Carlyle was or was not a 'racist' depends entirely upon one's definition of the term. Particularly, if 'racism' is defined in *biological* terms, that is, as the belief that certain 'races' are inherently and irremediably 'inferior' (or, as the case might be, 'superior') to others, it is not hard to demonstrate that Carlyle was not a 'racist'.¹³⁴⁷ On the other hand, if we subscribe to broader, contemporary notions of 'cultural racism', it is obvious that he was.¹³⁴⁸ In this sense, the existing literature presents the spectacle of a succession of scholars moving the goalposts back and forth, and back again, in accordance with their own objectives and opinions. Moreover, however we might choose to define the term, we will inevitably succumb to the sin of anachronism, projecting our own understandings of 'racism' back onto Carlyle. Third, the

Irish Famine and the geopolitics of travel', in *Journal of Historical Geography*, 32 (2006), 313-335.

1344 Julie M. Dugger, 'Black Ireland's Race: Thomas Carlyle and the Young Ireland Movement', in *Victorian Studies*, 48:3 (2006), 481-495 (469-470, 482); John Morrow, 'Thomas Carlyle, 'Young Ireland' and the 'Condition of Ireland Question'', in *Historical Journal*, 51:3 (2008), 643-667 (648).

1345 John Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 125. Morrow also refers to Carlyle's 'gratuitous racism' (250).

1346 While Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, ch. 5, contains a number of pregnant remarks, these are not adequately developed, as Morrow soon bogs down in the 'racism' debate.

1347 For instance, Park concluded that 'Carlyle differed from the Nazis in holding no clear-cut racial ideology of human behavioural or cultural characteristics being biologically determined', and that while he did generalise about the attributes of various races, he did not believe in "physiologic" theories of the innate genetic superiority or inferiority of various racial, national, or ethnic groups' ('Thomas Carlyle and the Jews', 16-18).

1348 E.g. Martin invokes 'Etienne Balibar's suggestion that, while the distinction between cultural racism and biological racism can be a useful tool of analysis, it is important to remember that "culture can also function like a nature, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin".' (Martin, 'Blood Transfusions', 91).

existing literature has become excessively polarised, 'racism' being, as it is, an emotive subject. In particular, scholars intent upon exculpating Carlyle have tended to simply ignore his more egregious declarations, whereas those commentators who have set out to build a case against him have suppressed his more considered, conciliatory statements. In reality, Carlyle's pronouncements on the subject of race were contradictory. Given to vehemence of expression, he did indeed at times state his belief in the innate inferiority of certain 'races' (particularly 'blacks'), leaving his audience with no doubt as to his views on the subject. However, elsewhere, he wrote and said the exact opposite, as we shall see. In sum, Carlyle was 'racist', and he wasn't.

Given the exhaustion of the 'racism' debate, the current chapter will attempt to re-orient discussion towards various other aspects of Carlyle's imperial thought. In doing so, it will attempt to do two things. First, in contrast to the existing secondary literature, which too often consists in specialised Carlyle scholars talking to (at) each other, an attempt will be made to re-examine Carlyle's writings in light of a burgeoning literature on 'international thought', and, more particularly, on the imperial thought of the Victorian period.¹³⁴⁹ Second, an attempt will be made to re-consider the relationship between the imperial thought of Carlyle and that of John Stuart Mill. As is well-known, Carlyle's 'Occasional Discourse' provoked an angry riposte from Mill, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* the following month (Jan. 1850). This brief exchange has dominated the existing secondary literature, to the near exclusion of all else. Moreover, here, the question of 'racism' has again taken central stage. For instance, Catherine Hall has argued that whereas Carlyle's article was 'conservative, ethnocentric, and racist', Mill's, in contrast, relied upon 'a developmental notion of human nature'.¹³⁵⁰ In comparable terms, Jennifer Pitts has recently claimed that whereas for Carlyle, the 'inferiority' of 'blacks' was 'natural', for Mill it was 'accidental and temporary'.¹³⁵¹ Such conclusions are of course framed by wider assumptions regarding Carlyle and Mill as the 'two divergent forces' of Victorian political thought, Carlyle supposedly being a 'Romantic', who 'had little interest in the concept of individual freedom', and Mill being a 'Liberal', who did.¹³⁵² In the following chapter, it will be argued that such conclusions are overly simplistic. By widening the

¹³⁴⁹For a programmatic statement regarding 'international thought', see the opening sections of David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For an overview of recent literature on Victorian imperial thought, see *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. D. Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹³⁵⁰See Hall, 'The Economy of Intellectual Prestige', 178-181, 189, 194, 196, and idem., *Civilising Subjects*, 378-379.

¹³⁵¹Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 151-157. Similarly, Georgios Varouxakis contrasts Carlyle's 'racialist' contempt for black people and the French with Mill's flexible, circumstantial understanding of national character (*Victorian Political Thought on France and the French* [Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002], 105-112).

¹³⁵²The position of T. Peter Park, 'John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, and the U. S. Civil War', in *The Historian*, 54:1 (1991), 93-106 (93-94).

scope of inquiry to some of Carlyle and Mill's other writings, it will become apparent that the two men in fact had much in common regarding imperial affairs, particularly concerning the concept of 'progress'. As Duncan Bell has recently noted, 'a great deal of attention has been lavished on John Stuart Mill' in the course of recent studies of Victorian imperial thought.¹³⁵³ Particularly, in response to the exaggerated claims of certain post-colonial scholars,¹³⁵⁴ historians have been at pains to stress that Mill subscribed to an 'ethical justification of empire',¹³⁵⁵ according to which imperialism was only justified insofar as it acted as a force for 'civilization' and 'improvement', leading 'dominated peoples to "progress" and eventual independence'.¹³⁵⁶ In this sense, Mill's imperial thought was an extension of the qualified, autonomy-enhancing paternalism he adopted in relation to domestic affairs.¹³⁵⁷ In what follows, it will be argued that many of these insights might be usefully extended to Carlyle. In particular, the Saint-Simonian vision of 'universal association', which transposed understandings of 'industrialism', the new 'organic' era, and the 'Organisation of Labour' onto a global scale, serves as a useful entry point into this subject.

One final caveat is necessary at the outset. In the following discussion, it will be argued that Carlyle subscribed to concepts of 'progress', 'civilisation', and 'improvement', which, while certainly elitist, authoritarian, and imperialist, were potentially universal in their implications. However, this does not necessarily mean that he was a 'civilisationist' rather than a 'racist'.¹³⁵⁸ Indeed, it is possible to be both at the same time. On the one hand, scholars such as Hall have worked on the assumption that 'civilisationist' arguments gave way to biological 'racism' around the middle of the nineteenth century, Carlyle being a key figure in this rupture.¹³⁵⁹ In opposition, historians, including, notably, Peter Mandler, have argued that 'civilisationist' justifications for empire remained predominant well into the twentieth century, biological 'racism' failing to gain any significant foothold in Britain.¹³⁶⁰ However, such clean distinctions between discourses of 'civilisation' and 'race' seem untenable, particularly if one admits the possibility of 'cultural racism'. Instead, it would perhaps be more

¹³⁵³Duncan Bell, 'Victorian visions of global order: an introduction', in *Victorian Visions of Global Order*, ed. D. Bell, 1-25 (4).

¹³⁵⁴For instance Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 100-101, 112. Mehta's claims regarding Mill are echoed by Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 142-143, also 21.

¹³⁵⁵Karuna Mantena, 'The crisis of liberal imperialism', in *Victorian Visions of Global Order*, ed. D. Bell, 113-135 (114, 119).

¹³⁵⁶Georgios Varouxakis, *Liberty Abroad: J. S. Mill on International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 115.

¹³⁵⁷Gregory Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 97.

¹³⁵⁸As Claeys passingly remarks with regard to Mill, in *Mill and Paternalism*, 119.

¹³⁵⁹Hall, op. cit.

¹³⁶⁰See particularly Peter Mandler, 'Race' and 'nation' in mid-Victorian thought', in *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, ed. Collini, Whatmore and Young (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 233-237.

accurate to state that these two discourses continued to co-exist and intermingle at least until the end of the nineteenth century.¹³⁶¹ Moreover, as Theodore Koditschek has recently pointed out, many mid and late nineteenth-century theories of 'racial difference' were 'neo-Lamarckian' rather than 'Darwinian', and thus 'the option was kept open that – very slowly, over centuries – races could deteriorate or improve'. The 'key point', according to Koditschek, 'is that the new scientific ideologies of evolution and race remained broadly *historical* in their thrust'.¹³⁶² As we shall see, Carlyle's imperial thought was full of such tensions, inconsistencies, and, indeed, outright contradictions.

I.

EARLY INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT: ROMANS AND SCOTS (1820-1830)

As has been noted in earlier chapters, among Carlyle's first literary endeavours were a number of entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, written during the early 1820s. These have been almost universally dismissed or ignored by previous commentators. For instance, Fred Kaplan, one of the few scholars to even acknowledge their existence, refers to them as 'mere badly paid hackwork, brief factual accounts of various encyclopedia headings chosen by the accident of the alphabet'.¹³⁶³ However, there is no such thing as a purely 'factual account'. In particular, while Carlyle might not have chosen the subjects of his entries, he did have some leeway as to the conceptual apparatus, and the languages, which he used to structure his source material. Moreover, Carlyle was by this time in his late twenties, and the articles in question thus cannot be dismissed as mere juvenilia. For these reasons, a brief consideration of these encyclopedia entries might prove useful in understanding some of the origins and underpinnings of Carlyle's later imperial thought. Of especial significance here are two references, one to the Roman empire, and the other to the so-called 'Scottish Enlightenment'.

As Anthony Pagden has demonstrated regarding the early modern period, it was, 'above all, Rome which provided the ideologues of the colonial systems of Spain, Britain and France with the language and political models they required, for the *Imperium romanum* has always had a unique

¹³⁶¹As noted by Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 113-115.

¹³⁶²Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth-Century Visions of a Greater Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 14-15. Koditschek suggests in passing that Carlyle might be a case in point, but does not develop the point (198-200).

¹³⁶³Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 61.

place in the political imagination of western Europe'.¹³⁶⁴ As Pagden notes, during the late Republic and Principate, the Romans 'merged' their concept of *imperium* with the 'Stoic notion of a single universal human race':

Zeno himself, founder of the Stoic School, had taught, or so Plutarch tells us, that "we all should live not in cities and demes (townships), each distinguished by separate rules of justice, but should regard all men as fellow demesmen and fellow citizens; and that there should be one life and order (*koinos*) as of a single flock feeding together on a common pasture"... it was a relatively easy step to think of Zeno's *koinos*, and of the Greek *oikumene* in general, as identical with the Roman *imperium*.¹³⁶⁵

In this sense, Pagden notes, 'the Roman *civitas* was crucially a civilization for exportation', and '*Imperium*' served, 'as a frequently quoted passage in Seneca's *De Clementia* implied', as 'the *vinculum societatis* – the links in the chain which could bind together the members of widely scattered communities'.¹³⁶⁶ As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the young Carlyle had responded positively to the writings of Stoics such as Zeno and Seneca. In one of his entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, on the 'Netherlands' (published around 1821 or 1822), Carlyle referred approvingly to the Roman Empire, explaining that the people of the Netherlands

submitted to the Romans, and participated in the improvements which that people usually communicated to the nations it conquered. The canal of Drusus, from the Rhine to the Flevo or Zayder Zee, still exists, though its character is altered, and the first dykes, which protected Holland from the ocean, are ascribed to the enterprising industry of those governors.¹³⁶⁷

While this is, of course, a mere passing remark made in the course of an encyclopedia article, it is worth bearing in mind for two reasons. First, it provides an initial basis for discussion of the rest of Carlyle's early international thought. Second, the Roman example of how to do empire was one to which Carlyle would return throughout his later writings, including in major works such as 'Chartism' (1839) and *Past and Present* (1843).

¹³⁶⁴Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 11.

¹³⁶⁵Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 19-20.

¹³⁶⁶Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 21-22.

¹³⁶⁷'Netherlands', in *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* [first published c. 1821/1822], as reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays, Chiefly Biographical*, ed. Crockett [1897], new ed. (London: Gibbings & Company, 1901), 109.

In ancient Rome, a number of other writers, including Sallust in his *Bellum Catilinae*, had taken a less sanguine view of empire, claiming that it inevitably led to military rule, dictatorship, the loss of liberty at home, and the subsequent decline and fall of the empire itself.¹³⁶⁸ It might thus be argued that the Roman example, which suggested that all empires were ultimately self-dissolving, was irrelevant to modern justifications of empire, which relied upon an open-ended notion of 'progress'.¹³⁶⁹ However, as Norman Vance has noted, the 'Roman experience gave the Victorians not a coherent model or example, but a rich and flexible vocabulary for public and private debate'.¹³⁷⁰ For this reason, there seems to be no reason why the Roman example should not have continued to co-exist alongside more modern concepts of 'progress'. Indeed, Carlyle's entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* are a case in point. In addition to the example of ancient Rome, Carlyle also made use of the 'four stages' theory of historical progress, as formulated in the course of the so-called 'Scottish Enlightenment'. Within this theory, human societies were classified (in ascending order) as 'savage' (hunters and gathers), 'barbarian' (shepherds and herders), 'agricultural', and, finally, 'commercial'.¹³⁷¹ As J. G. A. Pocock has recently cautioned, the 'four stages' theory had itself a complex history, having developed gradually and inconsistently over the course of the eighteenth century, before finally being given rigorous, schematic expression in the writings of Adam Smith.¹³⁷² However, by the late eighteenth century, 'philosophical thinking' was 'moving towards a stadial history of the modes of production, involving distinctions between those which did or did not appropriate the earth's surface, and between those which did so in different ways'.¹³⁷³ In an entry to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* on 'Persia', Carlyle, who had read Adam Smith,¹³⁷⁴ made use of this stadial theory, explaining:

¹³⁶⁸David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 125-132.

¹³⁶⁹Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 207-209, 218-221. See also Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 146-148.

¹³⁷⁰Norman Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 270.

¹³⁷¹The seminal study is Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), ch. 4.

¹³⁷²J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 64, 99-101. As Pocock explains, 'the one false step made by Meek', 'the pioneer historian of the stadial scheme', was thus 'that of taking the four stages narrative at its most highly developed, and looking for its first appearance in this form' (100).

¹³⁷³*Ibid.*, 166.

¹³⁷⁴'I was re[a]ding lately, Stewarts life of Robertson, Smith's wealth of nations, and Kames' Essays on the principles of morality... Dr Smith is a man of much research, & appears to understand completely all the bearings of his complicated subject. I have read his first and second volumes with much pleasure. He always writes like a philosopher' (TC to Thomas Murray, 22nd Aug. 1815, CL 1:59); 'I am glad that you like Adam Smith. I agree with you very cordially and regard him as one of the most honest & ingenious men of his age—or indeed of any other' (TC to Robert Mitchell, 31st Mar. 1817, CL 1:97-100).

In describing the character and manners of the Persians, it is necessary to divide them into two classes, namely, the agricultural or manufacturing class, who reside in fixed dwellings, and the wandering tribes, who subsist by their flocks, or by fishing, and live in tents.¹³⁷⁵

As noted in a previous chapter, Carlyle also translated an entry on 'Political Economy', written by the Swiss economist Sismondi. Here, Sismondi sought to refute Malthus's claim that population invariably increased more rapidly than the means of subsistence. In doing so, he also made clear use of the 'four stages' theory. According to Sismondi, in 'a state absolutely savage', in which 'men live on the produce of hunting and fishing', the 'fish and the game' would multiply more rapidly than man. Similarly, the 'progress of civilization' having substituted 'the pastoralist life for a life of hunting', herds of livestock would also multiply more quickly than their human owners. Next, when 'civilization' made 'a new step', 'pastoral nations' would 'abandon their flocks for agriculture', which would be even more productive. Thus, according to Sismondi, the problem of excess population was peculiar to commercial societies, in which population was regulated by the 'demand for labour which the capital of a country can pay, and not the quantity of food which that country can produce'.¹³⁷⁶ Given that Carlyle chose to translate Sismondi's essay in these terms, it seems fair to conclude that he was well-acquainted with the 'four stages' theory.

In the writings of the Scottish Enlightenment, this theory had been bound up with a belief that 'character' was shaped by circumstance, and particularly by the mode of production.¹³⁷⁷ For instance, in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Smith had argued that morality was a product of community and social interaction, and national 'manners' a reflection of national circumstances.¹³⁷⁸ Similarly, in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith insisted that "what forms the character of every nation, is the character of their government" ("government" being understood in a broad sense, as social relationships and laws).¹³⁷⁹ Moreover, as Pocock explains, another leading thinker of the Scottish Enlightenment, William Robertson, in his *History of America* (1777), rejected the idea that the 'indolence' of Native Americans was 'the sign or effect of any natural or physical inferiority',

1375 'Persia', in *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* [first published c. 1822/1823], as reprinted in American edition (Philadelphia PA: Joseph and Edward Parker, 1832), Vol. XV, Part II, 462. As noted in an earlier chapter, the concept of 'manners' was central to the historical writing of the Scottish Enlightenment.

1376 'Political Economy', trans. Carlyle, as reprinted in *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, ed. Brewster (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1830), Vol. XVII, 72.

1377 In this sense, as Jennifer Pitts has noted, writers such as Smith used terms such as "savage" and "barbarian" 'analytically', as descriptions of early stages of society, rather than evaluatively, as terms of moral rank or status' (*A Turn to Empire*, 34).

1378 Roberto Romani, *National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 163-175.

1379 Cited in *ibid.*, 163-175.

considering it to be rather 'socially induced; a way of life without labour begets an incapacity for it; and though caused by climate, these customs and their consequences are created by culture'.¹³⁸⁰ In his entry to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* on 'Newfoundland', Carlyle, who had read Robertson's *History*,¹³⁸¹ informed his readers that in 'their manners and character the inhabitants of Newfoundland display most of the qualities and defects commonly to be found in persons similarly situated'. In particular, the 'Aborigines' of Newfoundland exhibited 'the usual character of savages', while the Irish population were 'irregular and barbarous in their way of life'.¹³⁸² Furthermore, in his entry on 'Persia', Carlyle described the country's rulers as 'Asiatic despots', before adding:

The character of the Persian monarchs has often been exhibited by travellers as most tyrannical, and as reckless of the rights and lives of others. But if we consider the circumstances of their situation, and the manner in which they are educated, we should be surprised to find them possessed of mercy and humanity... Ruling over reluctant tributaries, who acknowledge their authority only by compulsion, and mountain tribes who subsist chiefly in plunder; and surrounded by ambitious nobles, eager to establish their independence, their power, to be efficient, must be dreaded, and the impression of terror is necessary to secure submission.¹³⁸³

The implication is that the character of Persian government was to be set down to the force of circumstance, rather than to any innate inferiority. Indeed, as we shall see, this was an argument that would continue to surface, albeit intermittently, in Carlyle's later writings, particularly with regard to Ireland.

As noted above, the fourth and final of the 'four stages' was that of 'commerce', or 'civilisation'. According to many of the writers of the Scottish (and English) Enlightenment, 'commerce' served as a stimulus to the development of human faculties, and thus to the improvement and refinement of character and manners. For instance, in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788), which the young Carlyle described as 'a work of immense research and splendid execution',¹³⁸⁴

¹³⁸⁰Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 195-197. See also 200.

¹³⁸¹'Did you ever read Watson's Histories of Philip II and III? If not look at it for my sake. Vertot's history of the Knights of Malta? or his revolutions of Rome? Voltaire's Charles XII? Robertson's *America*? Gibbon's Rome?' (TC to William Graham, 21st Dec. 1822, *CL* 2:238-242, emphasis added); 'I know not whether you have seen Robertson's History of America: if not try to get it, in preference to almost any other' (TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 15 Apr. 1824, *CL* 3:57-60).

¹³⁸²'Newfoundland' and 'Netherlands', in *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* [both first published c. 1821/1822], as reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays*, 165, 167, 221.

¹³⁸³'Persia', 458, 466, 469.

¹³⁸⁴TC to Robert Mitchell, 16th Feb. 1818, *CL* 1:118-122; 'Gibbon is a man whom one never forgets... the perusal of

Edward Gibbon wrote:

If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe, a supine indolence and a carelessness of futurity will be found to constitute their general character. In a civilised state every faculty of man is expanded and exercised; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can however, fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies, of social life.¹³⁸⁵

Moreover, according to the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment, 'commerce' between nations was of particular importance to this process of improvement and refinement.¹³⁸⁶ For instance, in his *History of Charles V* (which Carlyle had read, and frequently recommended to correspondents),¹³⁸⁷ William Robertson wrote that "Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men. It unites them, by one of the strongest of all ties, the desire of supplying mutual wants".¹³⁸⁸ Similarly, in the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith argued that "nothing" was more likely to bring about the "equality of courage and force" between nations than "the mutual communication of knowledge and of all sorts of improvements which an extensive commerce from all countries to all countries naturally, or rather necessarily, carries along with it".¹³⁸⁹ Indeed, as Pocock notes, this 'theory of progress, in which societies moved from barbarism to civilisation in proportion as they developed means of exchanging things and symbols, and so of multiplying and extending their ideas', was commonplace amongst Whigs and Moderates.¹³⁹⁰ Moreover, such ideas regarding the transformative potential of commerce were not limited to England and Scotland. For example, in his introduction to the *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770), which the young Carlyle read,¹³⁹¹ the Abbé Raynal wrote of

his work forms an epoch in the history of one's mind' (TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 26th Mar. 1823, *CL* 2:312-316).

1385 *Decline and Fall*, I:237, cited in Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 81-82.

1386 Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 179-181. See also Albert O. Hirschmann, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* [1977] (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 60-63.

1387 For instance TC to William Graham, 24th Apr. 1821, *CL* 1:353-356; TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 7th Mar. 1824, *CL* 3:40-45; JBW to TC, 4th Apr. 1824, *CL* 3:54-56.

1388 Cited in Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 138.

1389 Cited in Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 179-181.

1390 Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 40.

1391 'You are very right in stating that the Abbé Raynal is rash in some of his conjectures... and it is only for the facts

a revolution in the commerce, and in the power of nations; as well as in the manners, industry, and government of the whole world. At this period, new connections were formed by the inhabitants of the most distant regions, for the supply of wants they had never before experienced... A general intercourse of opinions, laws and customs, diseases and remedies, virtues and vices, was established among men.¹³⁹²

In another part of the same work, Diderot held out the possibility of a truly “universal society”, existing for “the common interests and the reciprocal interest of all the men of which it is composed”.¹³⁹³ In his entry to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* on the 'Netherlands', Carlyle described the Dutch as 'a people in whom intercourse with remote and dissimilar nations had softened the asperities of bigotry'.¹³⁹⁴ Similarly, in the entry on 'Persia', Carlyle looked forward to the ways in which commerce might improve the 'character' of the country's inhabitants, writing:

It is possible that by their intercourse with the different polished countries of Europe, particularly through the medium of well informed men who visit them, and communicate the information and the spirit which predominate in enlightened communities, they may lay the foundation for a new era in the national character and condition.¹³⁹⁵

'Polished', 'enlightened', 'character'; these are all common-places of the Scottish Enlightenment. Moreover, such ideas were not limited to Carlyle's entries in the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*. Indeed, his belief in the civilising power of commerce continued to play an important role in his writings throughout the 1820s. For instance, in the 'State of German Literature' (1827), Carlyle claimed that 'commerce in material things has paved roads for commerce in things spiritual', adding that 'if the grand principle of free intercourse is so profitable in material commerce, much more must it be in the commerce of the mind'.¹³⁹⁶ Returning to this theme early in 1830, shortly before his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle wrote, in similar terms:

that his books contain, that anyone can respect them' (TC to Alexander Carlyle, 29 Mar. 1819, in *CL* 1:171-173). Also: 'I trust by and by you will resume Gibbon, and finish both him and Hume. Do you like Robertson?... I recommend you to the Abbé Raynal, whose History at least the edition of 1781, is, to use the words of my tailor respecting Africa, “*wan coll* of burning sulphur.”' (TC to Jane Baillie Welsh, 7th Mar. 1824, in *CL* 3:40-45).

¹³⁹²Cited in Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 235.

¹³⁹³Cited in Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 179-181.

¹³⁹⁴'The Netherlands', 114.

¹³⁹⁵'Persia', 492.

¹³⁹⁶'State of German Literature' [1827], in *CME* I:25, 30-31.

free intercourse, and reciprocal familiarity among nations, whom Commerce indeed brings together, but only Literature can cause to speak together, and understand each other, is already widening our horizon... Let nations begin to know each other, and they will begin to love each other; for virtues are in each.... and man is drawn by invisible links towards all worth in man.¹³⁹⁷

However, given the arguments made in the previous chapter regarding the republican aspects of Carlyle's thought, it is important to emphasise that Carlyle saw no necessary contradiction between, on the one hand, such cosmopolitan ideals, and, on the other, patriotism. For instance, in the *Life of Schiller* (1825), Carlyle opined that 'Nature herself has, wisely no doubt, partitioned us into "kindreds, and nations and tongues"', adding: 'We require individuality in our attachments: the sympathy which is expanded over all men will commonly be found so much attenuated by the process, that it cannot be effective on any'.¹³⁹⁸ Similarly, three years later, in 'Burns' (1828), Carlyle wrote, referring to his native Scotland:

We hope, there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland.¹³⁹⁹

In this sense, the young Carlyle combined patriotism and cosmopolitanism, stressing the benefits of commerce, both material and spiritual, *between* distinct nations, who, he believed, might learn much from each other. These enlightened, cosmopolitan aspects of Carlyle's early thought, as well as his faith in 'progress' and the 'civilising' power of 'commerce', are altogether absent from the existing secondary literature. In the first place, these rather call into question the cliché of Carlyle as a bigoted nationalist, imperialist, and 'racist'. Moreover, they are also important in understanding the foundations of his later imperial thought, as we shall see in subsequent sections.

'PRESBYTER' AND THE *DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COURIER* (1829-1830)

Before moving on to look at the Saint-Simonian concept of 'universal association', it is worth briefly considering one other possible source of Carlyle's international thought. In an article

¹³⁹⁷Carlyle's *Unfinished History of German Literature* [written c. spring 1830], ed. Shine (Lexington KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 7-8. This possibly owed something to the Stoic theory of *oikeiôsis*.

¹³⁹⁸*The Life of Friedrich Schiller* [1825], People's edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), 89-90.

¹³⁹⁹'Burns' [1828], in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, People's Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), II:28.

published in 1971, entitled 'Carlyle and the Negro Question Again', Ian Campbell drew attention to a series of letters that appeared in the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier*, Carlyle's local newspaper, between December 1829 and January 1830.¹⁴⁰⁰ Signed 'Presbyter' (the author identified himself as a minister of the Church of Scotland), these dealt with the 'West Indies Question', and, as Campbell put it, demonstrated a 'remarkable continuity of thought with Carlyle's writings on the subject twenty years later'.¹⁴⁰¹ In his letters, 'Presbyter' refused to accept that 'Negroes' were 'by nature... lazy and stupid', being 'men', and therefore 'actuated by human motives'.¹⁴⁰² However, he also argued that 'the slave population of the West Indies' was not, 'in its present condition, prepared for enjoying and profiting by the blessings of liberty', citing in support of his claim the consequences that had followed premature emancipation of 'an ignorant, savage, and unprincipled population' in Haiti.¹⁴⁰³ In this sense, the 'immediate manumission' of slaves in the British West Indies 'could not fail to be a curse instead of a blessing – thus adding injury, and crowning all by preparing for a whole people inevitable ruin, under the insidious and insulting name of a boon'.¹⁴⁰⁴ However, 'Presbyter' made clear that slave-owners were 'constrained by duty to consider themselves, as respects these dependants, placed in a situation of the highest responsibility, and charged by Providence with the care, not merely of their worldly comfort and advantage, but of their intellectual improvement, and of their moral and religious education'.¹⁴⁰⁵ Provided this duty was fulfilled, 'the period [would] arrive when the manumission of the slaves [would] become the acknowledged interest of their masters'.¹⁴⁰⁶ While Campbell insisted upon the 'Calvinist' nature of these letters, it might be argued that they also drew upon a number of assumptions regarding 'civilisation' and 'progress', similar to those outlined above. However, in contrast to the Enlightenment belief in the spontaneous development of commerce, 'Presbyter' stressed the need for conscious, deliberate government. While 'Presbyter' was a universalist, insisting that 'Negroes' were 'men', he also believed that they remained 'savages', and required to be governed, educated, and improved by a more advanced people, until such a point that they might safely be emancipated. As we shall see, such ideas would surface repeatedly in Carlyle's later writings on empire.

1400Campbell, 'Carlyle and the Negro Question Again', 286-288. Campbell convincingly demonstrated that Carlyle was reading the paper at the time. See, for instance, TC to the Editor of the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier*, 12th Apr. 1830, *CL* 5:93-95, a letter written in response to an article that appeared on 22nd Sep. 1829.

1401Campbell, 'Carlyle and the Negro Question Again', 286-288.

1402'On the West Indian Question', in *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* (19th Jan. 1830), cited in *ibid*.

1403'On the West Indian Question', in *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* (29th Dec. 1829), cited in *ibid*.

1404'On the West Indian Question', in *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* (22nd Dec. 1829), cited in *ibid*.

1405'On the West Indian Question', in *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* (5th Jan. 1830), cited in *ibid*.

1406'On the West Indian Question', in *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* (19th Jan. 1830), cited in *ibid*.

II.

SAINT-SIMON, THE SAINT-SIMONIANS, AND 'UNIVERSAL ASSOCIATION'

To a large extent, Saint-Simon echoed earlier Enlightenment ideas regarding the progressive, civilising force of commerce (though he, of course, used the term *industrie*). For instance, in *L'Industrie* (1818), one of the volumes that the Saint-Simonians sent to Carlyle, Saint-Simon argued that war was detrimental to the interests of the industrious classes, 'the *industriels*' being 'the class of society most interested in the maintenance of order'.¹⁴⁰⁷ Due to such statements, Saint-Simon has longed enjoyed a reputation as a theorist of peaceful European federation.¹⁴⁰⁸ In their writings, the Saint-Simonians extended many of these insights, combining them with their own ideas regarding 'industrialism', the need for a new 'organic' era, and the 'Organisation of Labour'. In this sense, their international thought simply transposed their domestic programme onto a world scale. For instance, in the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, the Saint-Simonians outlined a progressive theory of history, culminating in the unification of humanity through peaceful, mutually beneficial *industrie*. As they put it, the meaning of history consisted in 'the *continual diminution of the influence of the military classes*, that is, the Exploitation of Man by Man, and the simultaneous *progress of the pacific workers*, that is, the Exploitation of the Globe by Industry'.¹⁴⁰⁹ Shortly thereafter, the Saint-Simonians wrote of

the tendency of humanity towards *universal association*, the ultimate organic era into which the most civilised peoples are on the point of entering today... [this] must be extended so as to combine all human energies in a single peaceful direction, with the aim of augmenting the *love, knowledge and wealth* at the disposal of humanity, and realising an hierarchy in which individuals will be classed and remunerated *according to their capacity*.¹⁴¹⁰

¹⁴⁰⁷Saint-Simon, *L'Industrie, où Discussions politiques, morales et philosophiques, dans l'intérêt des hommes livrés à des travaux utiles et indépendans*, tome quatrième, premier cahier (Paris: Chez Verdière, 1818), 43-44.

¹⁴⁰⁸See Alfred Pereire, 'Saint-Simon: Précurseur de l'Entente Cordiale', in his *Autour de Saint-Simon. Documents originaux* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1912), 71-83; Eugène d'Eichthal, 'Les idées de Henri de Saint-Simon sur la paix européenne', in *Séances et travaux de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, 85 (1925), 350-361; Elliot H. Polinger, 'Saint-Simon, the Utopian Precursor of the League of Nations', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4:4 (1943), 475-483; László Ledermann, 'Le Comte de Saint-Simon et son projet de fédération européenne', in his *Fédération internationale: idées d'hier; possibilités de demain* (Neuchâtel: Editions de la Baconnière, 1950), 43-66; Charles-Olivier Carbonell, *L'Europe de Saint-Simon* (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 2001), 103-123; Armin Owzar, 'Vereinigte Staaten oder Kulturen? Saint-Simons Verfassungsprojekt und der Europa-Diskurs im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', in *Hegelianismus und Saint-Simonismus*, ed. Schmidt am Busch et al. (Paderborn: Mentis, 2007), 37-52.

¹⁴⁰⁹*Doctrine de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année. 1829. Seconde Édition* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur and A. Mesnier, 1830), 24.

¹⁴¹⁰*Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. 2me Année. 1829-1830* (Paris: Bureau de l'Organisateur, 1830), 5-6.

For the Saint-Simonians, in the 'universal association' of 'industry', 'the various nations, spread across the surface of the globe, would become the members of a single vast workshop, labouring under a single law towards the accomplishment of a single destiny'.¹⁴¹¹ When this had been accomplished, 'the circle of men who can aspire to become *captains*, *princes* of industry, would embrace the whole of humanity'.¹⁴¹² In sum, in the publications that Carlyle possessed, the Saint-Simonians set out a utopian vision of an 'Organisation of Labour' on a global scale. While drawing on many earlier Enlightenment assumptions regarding *doux commerce*, the Saint-Simonians significantly modified these, stressing the need for conscious regulation and planning of economic growth.

As we have seen in a previous chapter, the Saint-Simonians had characterised 'liberalism' as a purely negative, 'critical' ideology, which, while playing an important role in the destruction of the superannuated institutions of the medieval past, offered no positive, 'organic' vision for the future. Indeed, the Saint-Simonians extended many of these arguments to international affairs. For instance, in an article that Carlyle possessed, the Saint-Simonians had ridiculed attempts to export 'liberal' ideas and institutions, arguing that the latter were specific to a 'critical' era in European history, and thus irrelevant to the rest of the world. The article, which dealt with the Greek War of Independence, explained that 'none of the elements of modern European society are present in Greece', continuing:

What a bizarre idea, in effect, to want to establish institutions designed to resist the power of the papacy and monarchy, to a country where there is neither pope nor monarch!... Our habitual terms of political debate have become the prism through which we perceive objects, and which hide from us the true nature of the Greek insurrection. The partisans of the past, such as the liberals, see here only a continuation of the French Revolution, and the symptoms of the supposedly universal tendency towards *liberty*.¹⁴¹³

In this sense, for the Saint-Simonians, such 'critical' ideas were already outmoded, the future of the humanity lying not in 'liberty', but in 'organic' industrialism, and the 'Organisation of Labour' on a global scale.

1411 *Doctrines de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 178.

1412 *Doctrines de Saint Simon. Exposition. Première Année*, 193-194.

1413 'De La Grèce', in *Le Producteur, journal philosophique de l'industrie, des sciences et des beaux-arts*, tome cinquième (Paris: Sautet et Cie., 1826), 7-11.

III.

'THE GRAND INDUSTRIAL TASK OF CONQUERING THIS TERRAQUEOUS PLANET': CARLYLE'S IMPERIAL THOUGHT, 1830-1845

In the writings of the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle would have found echoes of many his earlier ideas, including the belief that peaceful commerce between nations might one day put an end to war. Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle continued to express his dislike of war, arguing that this was detrimental to the interests of the industrious classes. For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), he described a fictional battle between two armies, one composed of thirty artisans from 'the British village of Dumdrudge', and the other composed of 'thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge'. Carlyle wrote: 'Their Governors had fallen out; and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot'. The result of the battle was that, 'in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses'.¹⁴¹⁴ Similarly in *The French Revolution* (1837), Carlyle wrote that under the *ancien régime*, the lower classes were sent 'to fatten battlefields with their bodies, in quarrels which [were] not theirs'.¹⁴¹⁵ Six years later, in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle declared:

Under the sky there is no uglier spectacle than two men with clenched teeth, and hellfire eyes, hacking one another's flesh; converting precious living bodies, and priceless living souls, into nameless masses of putrescence, useful only for turnip-manure.¹⁴¹⁶

However, while the Saint-Simonians shared many of the young Carlyle's opinions regarding 'progress', 'commerce', and 'civilisation', they combined these with a novel emphasis on the need for such processes to be consciously organised and guided, for the benefit of humanity as a whole. As noted above, this was an extension of the Saint-Simonians' domestic programme of 'industrialism' and the 'Organisation of Labour'. In Carlyle's writings subsequent to his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, echoes of these authoritarian ideas were clearly discernible. Moreover, in these writings, abstract references to 'commerce' were increasingly supplanted by vivid accounts of 'industry', of real, physical acts of work. For instance, the Saint-Simonians had argued that historical progress

¹⁴¹⁴*Sartor Resartus* [written 1830-1831, first published 1833-1834], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 134.

¹⁴¹⁵*The French Revolution* [1837], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1906), I:10-11.

¹⁴¹⁶*Past and Present* [1843], Everyman edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1912), 183.

took place through a series of 'organic' and 'critical' eras, and that previous organic eras, particularly antiquity and feudalism, could serve as models for the organic 'industrialism' of the future. This conception of history enabled Carlyle to draw upon his earlier understanding of the Roman Empire, as expressed in his entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, and to thus present Rome as a paragon for the English. For instance, in 1838, Carlyle argued that the Romans had been characterised by 'an intensely industrious thrift', and that their role in history had been 'to subdue people into polity', and to 'compel them by force to accept their civilisation, such as it was, in preference to the mere foolish and savage method of their own'. For Carlyle, the Roman Empire was thus 'the triumph of civil, methodic man over wild and barbarous man', in that it taught 'mankind that they should be tilling the ground, as they ought to do, instead of fighting one another!'.¹⁴¹⁷ In 'Chartism' (1839), Carlyle extended this analysis, arguing that the 'Romans, having conquered the world, held it conquered, because they could best govern the world'. Understanding this, 'the mass of men found it nowise pressing to revolt; their fancy might be afflicted more or less, but in their solid interests they were better off'.¹⁴¹⁸ In the same essay, Carlyle proposed that the English people were called upon to perform this role in the future. In doing so, he made a telling reference to the Saint-Simonian concept of 'industrialism'.¹⁴¹⁹ According to Carlyle, 'the English' had been assigned:

the grand *Industrial* task of conquering some half or more of this Terraqueous Planet for the use of man; then secondly, the grand Constitutional task of sharing, in some pacific endurable manner, the fruit of said conquest, and shewing all people how it might be done.¹⁴²⁰

Thus, as John Morrow astutely remarks, Carlyle, instead of 'seeing Britain as the "workshop of the world"', 'urged the English to transform the world into a workshop'.¹⁴²¹ Four years after the publication of 'Chartism', in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle again returned to this theme, once again invoking the Roman Empire as a model for the English to emulate. According to Carlyle, the English, 'like the old Romans', were destined to distinguish themselves through industry, traversing the world with 'sea-moles, cotton-trades, railways, fleets and cities, Indian Empires, Americas, New-Hollands'.¹⁴²²

¹⁴¹⁷*Lectures on the History of Literature* [delivered 1838], ed. Greene (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1892), 36-47.

¹⁴¹⁸'Chartism' [1839], *CME* VI:134-135.

¹⁴¹⁹In a footnote, John Morrow passingly remarks: 'Carlyle's claims about the 'English' assumption of moral and industrial leadership might be seen to imply a rejection of Saint-Simonian claims of French superiority' (Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 244). This point deserves to be developed further.

¹⁴²⁰'Chartism', 160, emphasis added.

¹⁴²¹Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 114.

¹⁴²²*Past and Present*, 151-154.

In envisaging the leading role that 'England' was destined to play in the worldwide march of industrialism, Carlyle attached particular importance to emigration.¹⁴²³ This would provide at least a partial solution to domestic problems such as 'pauperism', while also serving as a means to the industrial development of the rest of the world. In 1827, Carlyle had translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*. Here, Goethe had remarked; 'what boundless spaces are still lying open to activity', adding: 'Where I am useful, is my country!'.¹⁴²⁴ In 1832, Carlyle wrote to Mill: 'What after all is the World anywhere but a Workshop; your best room in it, that where your Tools lie most convenient?'.¹⁴²⁵ In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle dismissed Malthusian fears of 'open mouths opening wider and wider', asking: 'what portion of this inconsiderable terraqueous Globe have ye actually tilled and delved, till it will grow no more?'.¹⁴²⁶ However, Carlyle also emphasised the desirability of organising emigration. Moreover, he frequently articulated such proposals in terms of the Saint-Simonian theory of 'critical' and 'organic' eras, envisaging organised emigration as a key aspect of a larger 'Organisation of Labour'. For instance, at the end of 'Chartism', Carlyle, having already called for a general system of 'Education', then proposed a

second great thing: Emigration. It was said above, all new epochs, so convulsed and tumultuous to look upon, are 'expansions', increase of faculty *not yet organised*. It is eminently true of the confusions of this time of ours. *Disorganic* Manchester afflicts us with its Chartisms; yet is not the spinning of clothes for the naked intrinsically a blessed thing? ... Manchester once *organic* will bless and not afflict... How true is this, above all, of the strange phenomenon called 'over-population'! Over-population is the grand anomaly, which is bringing all other anomalies to a *crisis*... On a certain western rim of our small Europe, there are more men than were expected... And yet, if this small western rim of Europe is over-peopled, does not everywhere else a whole vacant Earth, as it were, call to us, Come and till me, come and reap me!¹⁴²⁷

¹⁴²³As several historians have noted, the empire provided an important outlet not only for the 'excess of educated men' produced by Scottish universities, but also for the surplus of talent in all areas of national life. See Leonore O'Boyle, 'The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800-1850', in *Journal of Modern History*, 42:4 (1970), 478-487, and Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* [1992], (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 120-133. This was true of many of Carlyle's own relations and acquaintances, and subjects relating to emigration featured frequently in his letters of this period. For instance, Carlyle's brother Alexander was continually contemplating emigration to America. See TC to AC, 30th Nov. 1836, CL 9:97, and TC to AC, 1st July 1835, CL 8:166-167.

¹⁴²⁴*Wilhelm Meister's Travels; or, The Renunciants. A Novel*, trans. Carlyle [1827], reprint (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1991), 343.

¹⁴²⁵TC to JSM, 18th May 1832, CL 6:154. See also 'Chartism', 182.

¹⁴²⁶*Sartor Resartus*, 172, 175.

¹⁴²⁷'Chartism', 182, emphasis added. Following the publication of 'Chartism', Carlyle informed his mother that he had, 'at a Public Meeting of Paisley people', 'been named as one of a deputation to wait upon Lord John Russell about

In a letter written the following year, in 1840, Carlyle envisaged governments instituting 'an organised continuous *System of Emigration*', and, in the lectures *On Heroes*, delivered the same year, he predicted that:

England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe.¹⁴²⁸

Given the debate that has raged in the secondary literature regarding 'race' and 'racism', it is worth briefly examining what Carlyle actually meant in using terms such as 'the English' and 'Saxondom'. As noted above, the young Carlyle had made significant use of the 'four stages' theory, a universal schema of historical progress, in which all peoples passed through successive stages of 'savagery', 'barbarism', 'agriculture', and, finally, 'commerce'. Even in his writings of the 1830s and early 1840s, such 'civilisational' ideas continued to surface. In particular, Carlyle clearly did not consider the 'English', or 'Saxons', to be innately, inherently superior to other peoples. Indeed, they too had had to pass through the exact same process of development as other peoples. Moreover, according to Carlyle, foreign invaders had been justified in subjugating the English, and force-marching them along the path of 'progress', since this was for their own good. In 'Chartism', he wrote:

So too in this England long ago, the old Saxon Nobles, disunited among themselves... could not have governed the country well... a new class of strong Norman Nobles... were in a condition to govern it... [and] drilled this wild Teutonic people into unity and peaceable co-operation... Of conquest we may say that it never yet went by brute force and compulsion; conquest of that kind does not endure. Conquest... must bring benefit along with it, or men... will fling it out.¹⁴²⁹

Moreover, with regard to the present, Carlyle did not believe that the 'English' were the only people destined to play a leading role in the march of industrial progress. For instance, in 1842, Carlyle wrote to a correspondent, praising Russia's ability to 'drill wild savage peoples and tame waste

emigration!' (TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 15th July 1840, *CL* 12:196).

1428TC to A. H. Simpson, 19th July 1840, *CL* 12:202-203; *On Heroes*, 114.

1429'Chartism' [1839], *CME* VI:134-135. As Karen O'Brien points out, from the early seventeenth-century onwards, historians had increasingly come to evaluate the Norman Conquest positively. One such historian was Sir William Temple, whom Carlyle had read. See O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment*, 89-90, and Carlyle, journal entry 27th Dec. 1826, in *Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. C. E. Norton (New York: The Grolier Club, 1898), 84.

continents' (here, a potential source was Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*).¹⁴³⁰ The following year, in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle repeated this point, writing: 'the silent Russians, too, I believe, to be worth something: are they not even now drilling, under much obloquy, an immense semi-barbarous half-world from Finland to Kamtschatka, into rule, subordination, civilisation, - really in an old Roman fashion'.¹⁴³¹ The same year, Carlyle also praised the dictator of Paraguay, Dr. Francia, for having coerced the 'rude' 'Gaucha population', 'not yet fit for constitutional liberty', into habits of work and obedience.¹⁴³² This seems, then, to be something approaching an 'ethical justification of empire',¹⁴³³ imperial rule being justified only insofar as it benefited those subject to it, 'drilling' them into habits of industry and order. In this sense, Carlyle's imperial ideas were an extension of his domestic thought, particularly regarding 'industrialism', the 'Organisation of Labour', and aristocratic republicanism.

While Carlyle thus made clear his ideal of what an empire should be, he also gave some indications as to what kind of practices an empire ought to eschew. Significantly, this has been altogether overlooked in the existing secondary literature. In an earlier section, it was noted that the young Carlyle had read, and responded fairly favourably, to the Abbé Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770). In the course of the preparation of his article on 'Dr. Francia', the dictator of Paraguay, Carlyle seems to have re-read this work, and his article, published in July 1843, contained repeated references to Raynal.¹⁴³⁴ In the *Histoire*, Raynal had condemned the Spanish conquest of the New World in no uncertain terms, describing the *conquistadores* as "robbers intent on nothing but plunder", and asking: "Tell me, reader, whether these were civilised people landing among savages, or savages among civilized people?".¹⁴³⁵ Moreover, Raynal also described the Spaniards' discovery of the gold mines of Potosi, which they immediately proceeded to exploit (in order to fund wars of religion back in Europe), using the native population as slave labourers. As Pocock points out, for Raynal, this 'wholly extractive economy which, because it does not render land productive for

1430TC to Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, 19th Dec. 1842, *CL* 15:239. According to Pocock, in the *Decline and Fall*, 'Gibbon follows Voltaire in believing that Russian and Chinese domination of the steppe will reduce it to cultivation and urbanisation, thus ending forever that age, traceable back to biblical and mythical times, in which the shepherd peoples emerged from time to time to overthrow and renew empires' (*Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 334-335).

1431*Past and Present*, 152.

1432'Dr Francia' [1843], in *CME* VII:25-26, 35.

1433Mantena, 'The crisis of liberal imperialism', in *Victorian Visions of Global Order*, ed. D. Bell, 114, 119 (already referred to in the introduction).

1434'Dr. Francia', 9, 26, 29, 30, 47.

1435*Histoire*, II:24-25, 11-12, as cited and translated in Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 276-278.

purposes of exchange, scarcely deserves the name of commerce at all'.¹⁴³⁶ Several months after the publication of 'Dr. Francia', Carlyle wrote, in a manuscript not published until after his death:

A terrible entity this same Spain... A Western Hemisphere given to Antichrist, the Enemy of God. There, in those dark countries, in those dark gold mines worked by the blood of poor black men, are forged the war-armaments, the infernal thunder, with which Antichrist persecutes the Saints of God... A true Wonderland, that Western Region; splendent with jewels and gold, where mercy and justice never come.¹⁴³⁷

Of course, in addition to Raynal, Carlyle might have encountered similar characterisations of the Spanish empire in any number of other sources. At this time, he had already begun work on *Cromwell*, and was thus immersed in mid seventeenth-century source material. As Anthony Pagden has noted, by the mid seventeenth century, 'it had become clear to most observers that the British and the French colonies in America were overwhelmingly bases for trade and the production of agricultural produce', whereas those of Spain were purely for the extraction of gold and silver. In particular, Pagden continues, many English writers of this period argued that such a seemingly endless supply of gold removed any incentive to invest in production and trade, and thus, in the long-term, turned out to be a 'poisoned chalice' for the Spanish.¹⁴³⁸ Indeed, this demonstrates the perils of dealing with Carlyle in a purely 'Victorian' context – a working historian, he was often immersed in much older texts, and their associated languages and discourses. In any case, the salient point here is that Carlyle's imperial thought paralleled the distinction he drew between, on the one hand, tyranny or despotism, and, on the other, aristocratic republicanism, in domestic affairs. For Carlyle, in order to be legitimate, imperial rule could not consist in the wholesale plunder and enslavement of subject (non-European) peoples, but rather in progressive, 'civilising' rule, which promoted the development of industry, as well as the moral improvement of those who performed it.

If echoes of Carlyle's earlier ideas regarding progress, commerce, and civilisation were still discernible in his writings of the 1830s and early 1840s, the same was no less true of his youthful cosmopolitanism. For instance, in his 'Historic Survey of German Literature' (1831), Carlyle wrote:

¹⁴³⁶Ibid.

¹⁴³⁷*Historical Sketches of Notable Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I. and Charles I.* [written Oct. 1843 – early 1844], ed. Alexander Carlyle (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899), 147-148.

¹⁴³⁸Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 66-71. See also 87-88.

The better minds of all countries begin to understand each other; and, which follows naturally, to love each other, and help each other... [the] tendency is to a universal European Commonweal; that the wisest in all nations will communicate and cooperate; whereby Europe will again have its true Sacred College, and Council of Amphictyons; wars will become rarer, less inhuman, and in the course of centuries such delirious ferocity in nations, as in individuals it already is, may be proscribed, and become obsolete for ever.¹⁴³⁹

Several years later, in his lectures *On Heroes* (delivered in 1840), Carlyle declared, no less rhetorically:

Are not all true men that live, or that ever lived, soldiers of the same army, enlisted, under Heaven's captaincy, to do battle against the enemy, the empire of Darkness and Wrong? Why should we misknow one another, fight not against the enemy but against ourselves, from mere difference of uniform? All uniforms shall be good, so they hold in them true valiant men.¹⁴⁴⁰

Moreover, in the same lectures, Carlyle also included Mohammed, a non-European, in his pantheon of 'heroes'.¹⁴⁴¹ This infuriated contemporaries, one reviewer remarking: 'More than once Mr. Carlyle calls Mahomedanism a 'kind of Christianity.' So slavery may be a kind of liberty, and arsenic a kind of food'.¹⁴⁴² Indeed, such cosmopolitan sentiments are somewhat at odds with Carlyle's reputation as rabid nationalist and 'racist'. Furthermore, these ideas seem to have been further reinforced by another Saint-Simonian encounter the following year. As has been described in an earlier chapter, Carlyle, at the beginning of the 1830s, had corresponded with the Saint-Simonian Gustave d'Eichthal, also meeting him in London. In March 1841, Mill forwarded a copy of a recent pamphlet by D'Eichthal, entitled *De l'Unité Européenne* (1840), to Carlyle.¹⁴⁴³ In this pamphlet, D'Eichthal

¹⁴³⁹'Historic Survey of German Literature' [1831], *CME* III:249-251.

¹⁴⁴⁰*On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* [delivered 1840, published 1841], Oxford World's Classics edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), 121. See also 'Sir Walter Scott' [1838], *CME* VI:54.

¹⁴⁴¹*On Heroes*, 'Lecture II; The Hero as Prophet'.

¹⁴⁴²'The Works of Thomas Carlyle', in *The Eclectic Review*, XVII (Apr. 1845), 377-399 (385). See also William Sewell, untitled article, *Quarterly Review*, LXVI (Sep. 1840), 471-491, and William Thomson, review of *On Heroes*, in the *Christian Remembrancer*, VI (Aug. 1843), 138-140.

¹⁴⁴³See JSM to Gustave d'Eichthal, 9th Mar. 1841, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, XIII, 'The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848: Part II', ed. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964). Over the preceding years, former Saint-Simoniens had been active in the colonisation of Algeria, advocating peaceful 'association' between coloniser and colonised in mutually beneficial work. See Osama W. Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simoniens & The Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), ch. 3. D'Eichthal had taken a particular interest in such matters, and, while his writings certainly stereotyped subject peoples, they also argued that the French might learn lessons from the latter, finding some way to cooperate on the principle of 'each according to his capacity'. See Sandrine Lemaire, 'Gustave d'Eichthal, ou les amitiés d'une

reiterated the Saint-Simonians' vision of *association universelle*, writing:

Today, Europe has become an organic whole, animated by shared moral convictions, literature, sciences, arts, industrial and commercial interests, outside of which no nation can now grow, let alone subsist. And it is evident that this unity, which has already spread to a large part of the planet, will, before long, embrace the latter in its entirety. In this sense, human society is like any other organic body, insofar as its life begins fragmented and anarchic, tending towards unity and harmony as the body develops.¹⁴⁴⁴

Given his affection for D'Eichthal, it is quite possible that Carlyle read the pamphlet. In any case, five months later, in August 1841, Carlyle expressed comparable sentiments in a letter to Johann H. Künzel, the editor a 'new international literary journal, the *Britannia*', writing:

He that honestly interprets between his own country and another, that makes his own country understand another, is doing, in all manner of senses, a good service. It is with Nations as with men: if they knew each other, if each clearly saw what the other meant, there *could* be no hostility among them, they would find that at bottom they *were* all cooperating.¹⁴⁴⁵

As Giuseppe Mazzini noted in an article published in the *British and Foreign Review* in 1844, Carlyle thus continued to exhibit 'cosmopolitan tendencies', sympathising with 'the beautiful, the noble, the great, wherever he finds it', and having a 'horizon' that extended 'beyond the limits of his country'.¹⁴⁴⁶

BEFORE THE 'NEGRO QUESTION': CARLYLE ON IRELAND, 1839-1849

According to one recent commentator, Carlyle's writings on Ireland were defined by a 'nexus of anti-Irish racism and Saxon nationalism'.¹⁴⁴⁷ Such assertions have recently been challenged, and, in my opinion, decisively refuted, by John Morrow, who has demonstrated that Carlyle attributed the

ethnologie saint-simonienne: du racialisme ambiant à l'utopie d'un métissage universel', in *Etudes saint-simoniennes*, ed. Régnier (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2002), 169.

1444Gustave d'Eichthal, *De l'Unité Européenne* (Paris: Truchy, 1840), 28.

1445TC to Johann H. Künzel, 12th Aug. 1841, *CL* 13:211-212.

1446[Giuseppe Mazzini], 'The Works of Thomas Carlyle', in *The British and Foreign Review; or, European Quarterly Journal*, Vol. XVI, no. XXXI (1844), 269.

1447Martin, 'Blood Transfusions', 94. See also the other articles referred to in the introduction to this chapter, most of which are also mentioned below.

'Condition-of-Ireland' not to Irish inferiority, but rather to the same causes as the 'Condition-of-England', that is, to *laissez-faire*.¹⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, as Morrow makes clear, Carlyle attributed the degraded condition of the populace not to 'fundamental flaws in the Irish character', but rather to 'the moral and material environment' of the country.¹⁴⁴⁹ This section broadly endorses Morrow's conclusions, while at the same time noting a few additional points in their support. Moreover, it also attempts to situate Carlyle's writings on Ireland in the context of his wider imperial thought, and particularly the 'civilisational' narrative outlined above.

In 'Chartism', Carlyle turned his attention to the 'Condition-of-Ireland', putting forward an analysis of the causes of the country's problems, while also attempting to propose some solutions to the latter. As we have seen in the previous section, Carlyle believed that in order to be legitimate, imperial rule had to act in the interests of those subject to it. In 'Chartism', he made it abundantly clear that the English had failed this test in Ireland. He wrote:

A government and guidance of white European men which has issued in perennial hunger of potatoes to the third man extant, - ought to drop a veil over its face, and walk out of court under conduct of proper officers; saying no word; expecting now of a surety sentence either to change or die.¹⁴⁵⁰

Indeed, the Chartist *Northern Star*, which frequently protested against English oppression of Ireland, drew particular attention to this passage, reprinting it in full.¹⁴⁵¹ Moreover, Carlyle also made clear that he did not consider the Irish to be inherently inferior to the English. For instance, he stated that all men 'were made by God', drawing the inference that the Irish 'Sanspotatoe is of the selfsame stuff as the super-finest Lord Lieutenant'. As has been seen above, in the discussion of Carlyle's contributions to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, the young Carlyle had drawn upon the Scottish Enlightenment belief that 'character' and 'manners' were defined primarily by 'circumstance'. Now, some fifteen years later, Carlyle again made use of this theory, arguing that 'the oppression has gone far farther than into the economics of Ireland; inwards to her very heart and soul. The Irish National character is degraded, disordered'. In this sense, Carlyle was one of many writers who used the 'four stages' theory to provide a circumstantial account of Irish character,

1448Morrow, 'Thomas Carlyle, 'Young Ireland' and the 'Condition of Ireland Question'', 647-648.

1449Ibid., 660. Morrow also points out Carlyle's belief that the reproduction of these conditions in Scotland would have the exact same effect on the country's inhabitants.

1450'Chartism', 125-129.

1451'Thoughts for the Thoughtful', in *The Chartist Circular*, no. 43 (18th July 1840), 175.

laying the blame for its degradation on the predations and misrule of the English.¹⁴⁵² Furthermore, Carlyle then warned that the reproduction of similar economic conditions in England would have the exact same effect on the English national character. He wrote:

Crowds of miserable Irish darken all our towns... In his rags and laughing savagery, he is there to undertake all work that can be done by mere strength of hand and back; for wages that will purchase him potatoes... The Saxon man if he cannot work on these terms, finds no work... the uncivilised Irishman, not by his strength but by the opposite of strength, drives out the Saxon native, takes possession in his room... the wretchedness of Ireland, slowly but inevitably, has crept over to us, and become our own wretchedness.¹⁴⁵³

This was, of course, a reference to Irish immigration, and certain scholars have lost no time in denouncing Carlyle's 'racist anti-immigrant politics'.¹⁴⁵⁴ However, the thrust of Carlyle's argument here was not against Irish immigrants as such, but rather against the effects of competition and *laissez-faire*.¹⁴⁵⁵ Indeed, he was fairly sympathetic to Irish immigrants as individuals, asking: 'these poor Celtiberian Irish brothers, what can *they* help it? They cannot stay at home and starve'.¹⁴⁵⁶ As with England, the only solution to the problems caused by *laissez-faire* would be 'management', 'grounded on sincerity and fact'. In this sense, England found itself 'embarked in the same boat' with Ireland, and the two countries would either 'sail together' or 'sink together'.¹⁴⁵⁷ As one contemporary reviewer of Carlyle's essay put it:

What then is to be done? Repeal of the Union is plainly impossible, and even were it carried, would be unavailing – for what custom-house could prohibit the ingress of Irishmen? We have here but one reason more, but that as powerful as any; - to raise the state of society in Ireland – to place tranquillity in that unfortunate country on a stable basis by wise and human laws – to encourage to the utmost the development of its natural resources, and by

1452 See Roberto Romani, *National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 204-205. Romani does not mention Carlyle. Elsewhere, Romani notes that 'scathing remarks on Irish character sometimes spring up like weeds alongside sociological arguments' (207). This remark might also be applied to Carlyle.

1453 'Chartism', 125-129. These ideas seem to have been worked out in a draft report on the condition of agricultural labourers in Carlyle's native Annandale (MS in the Huntington Library, cited in the editors' notes to TC to Henry Cole, 15th Oct. 1839, CL 11:203-204).

1454 Martin, 'Blood Transfusions', 94. See also 84.

1455 As Roger Swift rightly points out, 'the plight of the Irish in England' is thus 'presented as symptomatic both of England's misgovernment of Ireland in the past and of the socio-economic consequences of... *laissez-faire*'. See his 'Thomas Carlyle, Chartism, and the Irish in Early Victorian England', in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 21:1 (2001), 67-83 (79).

1456 'Chartism', 125-129.

1457 'Chartism', 125-129.

thus giving value to its native labour, to bring up the Irishman to the same standard of food as the Englishman.¹⁴⁵⁸

In this sense, the above passages of 'Chartism' closely paralleled Carlyle's analysis of the 'Condition-of-England question', laying the blame for Irish pauperism on *laissez-faire*, and proposing the 'Organisation of Labour' as a solution. Given the malleability of national character, Carlyle believed an improvement in Irish circumstances, brought about by wise 'management', would bring about a corresponding improvement in Irish character. However, these points were made somewhat obliquely in 'Chartism', and would only be further developed over subsequent years.

In 1845, Carlyle published his edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches*. Here, he sought to rehabilitate Cromwell, going, at times, to the point of hagiography. This included an attempt to justify Cromwell's actions in Ireland, such as the massacre perpetrated at Drogheda in 1649. Understandably, these passages tended to infuriate some Irish readers. For instance, one commentator, writing in the *Dublin Review*, declared that 'such a dunghill of dirt was never before exposed to the view of the public', concluding that Carlyle 'evidently knows nothing of the topography, history, or people of that long oppressed country'.¹⁴⁵⁹ However, it is important to understand exactly why Carlyle endorsed Cromwell's policies with regard to Ireland. According to Carlyle, Cromwell's priority had been to put an end to the 'desperate violence and misery' in which Ireland was embroiled, offering its inhabitants the chance to live as 'veracious orderly men, not as a blustering murderous kennel of dogs run rabid'.¹⁴⁶⁰ Having used force to cow the rebellious populace and restore order, Cromwell, according to Carlyle, had then brought about something approaching an organisation of labour. As Carlyle explained:

the Ringleaders, the Rebellious Landlords, and Papist Aristocracy; as to these also, there is a carefully graduated scale of punishments established... as for all "ploughmen, husbandmen, artificers and people of the meaner sort," they are to live quiet where they are, and have no questions asked... The mass of the Irish Nation lives quiet under a new Land Aristocracy; new, and in several particulars very much improved... ploughing, delving, hammering; with their wages punctually paid them; with the truth spoken to them, and the truth done to them,

1458 'Chartism and Church Extension', in *The British and Foreign Review*, 11 (1840), 1-31 (10).

1459 'The Great Irish Insurrection', in *The Dublin Review*, 21 (Sep. 1846), 65-131 (68-73).

1460 *Oliver Cromwell's Letters & Speeches: With Elucidations* [1845], original three volumes reprinted in one (London: Ward Lock & Co. Ltd, n.d.), 291-294, 300-301.

so as they had never before seen it since they were a Nation!¹⁴⁶¹

Of course, as a piece of history, this is probably complete nonsense. However, it does give a clue as to the kind of 'management' (to use the phrase from 'Chartism') that Carlyle envisaged for Ireland in the future. As with Carlyle's domestic thought, this vision of the organisation of labour in Ireland was certainly authoritarian, but it was not necessarily despotic, insofar as it was in the best interests of those concerned.

Over subsequent years, Carlyle increasingly turned his attention toward the condition of present-day Ireland. In doing so, he further developed many of the proposals that had been hinted at in 'Chartism' and *Cromwell*. Carlyle's renewed interest in Ireland seems to have been prompted by a meeting with 'three redhot Irish Repealers', including Charles Gavan Duffy, which took place in April 1845.¹⁴⁶² As Duffy later reminisced, Carlyle took a 'keen interest in every honest attempt to raise Ireland from her misery', 'reading constantly' on the subject, and supporting Duffy and his colleagues in their 'resistance to misgovernment from Westminster'.¹⁴⁶³ As before, Carlyle's guiding assumption was the need for an organisation of labour. In 1846, he expressed approval for the recent Labour Rate Act, which levied taxes on Irish landowners in order to finance the employment of the poor in public works.¹⁴⁶⁴ According to Carlyle, this constituted 'the most important law ever passed for Ireland; the beginning, I do hope, of a new time for that wretched land'.¹⁴⁶⁵ In 1847, Carlyle made a reference to Saint-Simonian industrialism, informing Duffy that Ireland's 'salvation' lay not in 'repeal', but rather in industrial development, suggesting that its inhabitants 'invite Capital, and Industrial Governors and Guidance (from Lancashire, from Scotland, from the Moon, or from the Ring of Saturn)'.¹⁴⁶⁶ Here, Carlyle's argument paralleled his belief that 'extension of the franchise', and other purely political reforms, would do nothing to solve the 'Condition-of-England question',

¹⁴⁶¹Oliver Cromwell's *Letters & Speeches*, 357-358. This is not dealt with by Morrow. Compare Froude, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (1872-74), regarding Cromwell's government of Ireland: "For the first and last time a government was about to be established in Ireland which, for the ten years that it endured, was to administer the country in the sole interests of honest labour – where the toiler was to reap the fruit of his toil, the idle and the vicious to reap the fruit of their devices... The Irish peasantry might be trusted to remain under their new masters, if the chiefs of their own blood were removed; and with peace, order, and good government, and protected from spoilage, they might be expected to conform at no distant time, to the habits, language, and religion of their conquerors" [Vol. I, p. 121, 133]. Cited in Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, 178-179.

¹⁴⁶²TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 28th Apr. 1845, *CL* 19:64-65.

¹⁴⁶³Charles Gavan Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), 6.

¹⁴⁶⁴TC to Alexander Carlyle, 2nd Oct. 1846, *CL* 21:37.

¹⁴⁶⁵TC to Alexander Carlyle, 3rd Oct. 1846, *CL* 21:66-67.

¹⁴⁶⁶TC to Duffy, 1st Mar. 1847, *CL* 21:166-169. Upon the death of Daniel O'Connell, one of the leading advocates of repeal, Carlyle wrote to his mother: 'O'Connell too, the wretched blustering quack, is dead' (TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 19th June 1847, *CL* 21:237).

the latter being an economic problem, which required an economic solution, i.e. the organisation of labour.

In a series of newspaper articles published in 1848, Carlyle further developed many of these themes, arguing that economic, rather than political, reform was the solution, both for Ireland and for the rest of Britain. For instance, in 'Ireland and the British Chief Governor', Carlyle denounced, in no uncertain terms, Britain's 'cowardly, false, and altogether criminal neglect of Ireland'.¹⁴⁶⁷ However, he also attributed the sufferings of the populace to the negligence of 'the Irish aristocracy', whom he accused of 'drinking punch and placing roulette', while their dependants starved.¹⁴⁶⁸ Indeed, Carlyle argued that Ireland's problems were substantially the same as those of the rest of Britain, being the product of competition and *laissez-faire*. For this reason, Carlyle believed that, rather than Ireland becoming independent, the two nations ought to co-operate more closely, in order to find a solution to their common difficulties. As he explained, writing of Ireland:

Nor indeed are their woes peculiar, or even specifically different from our own. We too in this island have our woes; governing classes that do not in the least govern, and working classes that cannot longer do without governing... we earnestly invite all Irish reformers to join us, promising them that no feasible proposal of theirs but shall be one of ours too, and that in fact our adventure and theirs... is one and the same.¹⁴⁶⁹

According to Carlyle, the more discerning Irish reformers were already taking steps in this direction, and deserved the full support of the British government. Moreover, in making this point, Carlyle again made reference to the Saint-Simonian concept of 'critical' and 'organic' eras. As explained in 'Legislation for Ireland': 'in disorganic Ireland itself there struggle organic filaments, - which, even in a British Parliament, a Chief Governor *could* endeavour to spin together!'.¹⁴⁷⁰ For Carlyle, such 'governing' and 'regulating' would ultimately take exactly the same form in Ireland as in Britain, namely the 'Organisation of Labour' along military lines, and the conscription of paupers into 'Industrial Regiments'.¹⁴⁷¹

1467'Ireland and the British Chief Governor' [13th May 1848], reprinted in *Rescued Essays of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Newberry (London: The Leadenhall Press, 1892), 74-77.

1468'Legislation for Ireland' [13th May 1848], in *Rescued Essays*, 55-57. See also 'The Repeal of the Union', [29th Apr. 1848], in *Rescued Essays*, 21.

1469'The Repeal of the Union', 46-48.

1470'Legislation for Ireland', 67-68.

1471'Irish Regiments of the New Era' [13th May 1848], in *Rescued Essays*, 93, 99-100. Theodore Koditschek has recently written, with reference to these articles: 'Ireland had proven to be culturally unassimilable and had therefore to be politically ruled with an iron fist. If the Irish could not be civilized, Carlyle ranted, they could at least be compelled to work. All Irish paupers should be put under military discipline and forced to undertake bog

Another notable aspect of Carlyle's writings on Ireland during these years was a persistent discourse of progress and civilisation. As has been seen earlier in this chapter, Carlyle, following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, had lost faith in the spontaneous development of commerce, believing that this needed to be consciously guided and organised. As he put it in 'Repeal of the Union':

the stern Destinies have laid upon England a terrible job of labour in these centuries... extending superficially to the Indies and the Antipodes over all countries, and in depth, one knows not how deep; for it is not cotton-spinning and commercing merely; it is (as begins to be visible) governing, regulating.¹⁴⁷²

However, over time, Carlyle's convictions in this regard had become ever more vehement, to the point that his proposals became far more authoritarian than anything the Saint-Simonians had ever envisaged. Insofar as they did, they were merely an extension of Carlyle's domestic programme, which, as we have seen in a previous chapter, was heavily indebted to classical notions of slavishness. For Carlyle, certain Irish paupers, like many of their English counterparts, were slaves to their own passions, and had thus strayed far from the laws of nature. They thus required to be governed by their superiors, who would guide them back into conformity with these laws. In this sense, authoritarian rule, and an authoritarian organisation of labour, would in fact be liberating for those subject to it, in that it would liberate them from themselves. In relation to Ireland, Carlyle employed this classical language of slavishness alongside that of 'savagery' and 'progress'. Moreover, in doing so, he made clear that such terms had little to do with race, and far more to do with history. In 'Repeal of the Union', he wrote:

The Celt of Connemara... [is] white and not black; *but it is not the colour of the skin that determines the savagery of a man*. He is a savage who in his sullen stupidity, in his chronic rage and misery, cannot know the facts of this world when he sees them... who curses instead of thinks and considers; brandishes his tomahawk against the laws of Nature... Fruitless futile insurrection, continual sanguinary broils and riot that make his dwelling-place a horror to mankind, mark his progress generation after generation; and if no

reclamation' (*Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, 157-158). However, the phrase 'culturally unassimilable' is misleading – Carlyle advocated exactly the same measures in England, believing that certain English paupers needed, no less than their Irish counterparts, 'to be politically ruled with an iron fist'. Moreover, Carlyle did not see 'work' as an alternative to 'civilization', but rather as a *means to* civilisation.

¹⁴⁷²'The Repeal of the Union', 33-34.

beneficent hand will chain him into wholesome *slavery*, and, with whip on back or otherwise, try to tame him and get some work out of him, - Nature herself, intent to have her work tilled, has no resource but to exterminate him as she has done for the wolves and various other obstinately *free* creatures before now!¹⁴⁷³

Moreover, in this same article, Carlyle did not shrink from applying the language of 'savagery' to British paupers, arguing that ongoing Irish immigration reproduced the conditions of Ireland in Britain, thus 'submerging our population into the depths of dirt, savagery, and degradation'.¹⁴⁷⁴ In this sense, Carlyle still remained indebted to certain aspects of the 'four stages' theory, notably a universal conception of progress, and a circumstantial account of human character. However, these were now combined with the classical language of slavishness, and with a highly authoritarian interpretation of the Saint-Simonian organisation of labour.

Carlyle's claim that 'the stern Destinies have laid upon England a terrible job of labour in these centuries', and that the latter had a duty to reform Ireland through authoritarian means, provoked a response from John Stuart Mill in the *Examiner*. Significantly, Mill agreed with Carlyle in principle, while arguing that the actual government was entirely unfitted to such a task.¹⁴⁷⁵ Mill wrote:

[Carlyle] preaches the divine Messiahship of England... There might be somewhat to be said for a pretension of this sort, if made in behalf of England by a Cromwell. If courage and capacity of the highest order... had invested some eminent ruler of this island with a temporary dictatorship... I for one should have nothing to object, if such a ruler claimed it as his duty, and consequently his right, having already Ireland under his power, to do a similar good work for it also; nor is it likely that either the duty or the right would in such case be gainsaid by Ireland itself. But at present the individual in whom England is personified, and who is to regard himself as the chosen instrument of heaven for making Ireland what it ought to be... is - Lord John Russell.¹⁴⁷⁶

This remarkable congruence of opinion between Mill and Carlyle is noteworthy, given the fact that

1473'The Repeal of the Union', 49-52, emphasis added.

1474'The Repeal of the Union', 25-28, 39. See also TC to J. C. Symons, 28th Nov. 1848, *CL* 23:162-164.

1475According to Lynn Zastoupil, Mill, by the late 1840s, had increasingly come to appreciate the potential benefits of direct British rule, particularly in India. Moreover, Mill shared Carlyle's hostility to absentee Irish landlords. See Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 129-133.

1476Mill, letter dated 5th May 1848, printed in *Examiner* (13th May 1848), 307-308.

their dispute over the 'Negro Question', supposedly their final break,¹⁴⁷⁷ was to occur a mere eighteen month later. As will be seen below, Mill and Carlyle differed far less on this subject than historians have assumed.

Mill's intervention, and his claim that the current government of England was unsuited to such an ambitious programme of reform, prompted Carlyle to clarify some of his ideas on the subject, in a manuscript entitled 'The English Talent for Governing'. As has been seen earlier in the chapter, Carlyle did not believe that the Irish were inherently inferior to the English, and had argued that the two nations ought to co-operate in solving their common problems. In this manuscript, Carlyle went even further, suggesting that if the Irish had better ideas about how to solve these problems, then the Irish ought to take charge of Britain. In this sense, Carlyle's argument paralleled the radical meritocracy that he advocated in domestic affairs ('each according to his capacity', to use the Saint-Simonian motto). Referring to Mill not as an implacable opponent, but as a 'friendly voice', Carlyle wrote:

Estimable friendly voices here and there have risen to remonstrate with me that England has little or no talent for governing... the united British Empire in a thousand inarticulate but strenuously earnest ways invites the English, Scotch or Irish citizen possessed of a governing talent to show himself in Heaven's name... If Ireland have the gov. talent, let Ireland become our Governor... If in Ireland there exists the man who can make the Chaos of Ireland into a Cosmos, - why, only, does he not come over hither and help the poor British Empire at large, for it is all one work.¹⁴⁷⁸

Clearly, Carlyle was far from being the 'anti-Irish racist' that some recent commentators have claimed.

In the summer of 1849, Carlyle embarked upon a journey to Ireland, guided by Duffy. Having recently published a number of articles on Ireland, Carlyle seems to have gained a reputation as a strident critic of British misrule. Indeed, shortly after Carlyle's arrival, Lord Clarendon, the viceroy of Ireland, informed Lord John Russell that 'Duffy, accompanied by that double-barrelled coxcomb

1477As claimed, for instance, by Park, 'John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, and the U. S. Civil War', 93-94.

1478'The English Talent for Governing' [1848]. The original manuscript is at Yale. I have consulted a photocopy of the original, JN 324 C37 1848a, Strouse Endowment for Thomas Carlyle, University of California Santa Cruz. Also partially reprinted in Phyllis Harnick, 'Point and Counterpoint: Carlyle and Mill on Ireland in 1848', in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 7 (1986), 26-33. Morrow does not deal with this.

Carlyle, has been perambulating the provinces collecting abuses'.¹⁴⁷⁹ Moreover, Carlyle attributed the degradation of the Irish character primarily to such 'abuses', not to any inherent inferiority.¹⁴⁸⁰ In this sense, he continued, as in 'Chartism', to draw upon the Scottish Enlightenment theory that character and manners were formed by circumstance. For instance, travelling to Ireland by boat, Carlyle wrote in his journal regarding his fellow passengers:

I was struck, in general, with the air of faculty *misbred* and gone to waste, or more or less 'excellent possibility much marred', in almost all these faces. The man had found himself so enveloped in conditions which he deemed unfair, which he had revolted against, but had not been able to conquer, that he had so to speak, *lost his way*: a sorry sight the *tragedy* of each of these poor men. But here too, surely, is a 'possibility': if the Irish faculty be good, you *can* breed it, put it among conditions which *are* fair, or at least fairer.¹⁴⁸¹

However, as in earlier texts, Carlyle, unlike the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, had little faith that the spontaneous growth of commerce would bring about the desired improvement in circumstances, and thus in character. To the contrary, he called for a deliberate organisation of labour, in order to force the march of progress.¹⁴⁸² Whereas in previous articles on Ireland, Carlyle had set out a highly ambitious, utopian vision of what this might look like, he now took a more modest approach, attempting to appreciate day-to-day, small-scale instances of organisation. For example, Carlyle was impressed by an agricultural school, at which he saw '45 rough peasant Lads... getting themselves actually trained and bred not to be Irish blackguards, but effective, cleanly, decent methodic men and tillers of the soil'.¹⁴⁸³ Similarly, visiting the farm of a certain Mr. Boyne, 'an excellent 'colonel of spademen" (the Saint-Simonian military metaphor again), Carlyle was struck by the latter's use of government grants to take in new land, noting that 'his cottagers' appeared 'healthy, hearty, swift and brisk, and even joyful, as we saw them at their labours'.¹⁴⁸⁴ In this sense, Carlyle placed his hopes for the regeneration of Ireland in the organisation of labour, just like his hopes for the regeneration of England and Scotland. As he informed Lord Clarendon around this time, such reforms held out the possibility of not only 'a new Ireland', but also the 'a new

1479Letter dated 31st July 1849, MS in Bodleian Library Oxford, cited in *CL* 24:101.

1480Cf. Nally, 'Eternity's commissioner': 'Carlyle thought that the problem was genes and not geography' (325).

1481*Reminiscences of My Irish Journey in 1849* [written summer 1849] (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882), 20.

Morrow rightly draws attention to this passage in his *Thomas Carlyle*, 127.

1482As Kaplan notes, correctly though somewhat anachronistically, Carlyle thus believed that Ireland's salvation lay not in "welfare", but rather in "work". Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 345.

1483TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 8th July 1849, *CL* 24:108. See also *Irish Journey*, 53.

1484*Irish Journey*, 130-135. See also TC to Lord Clarendon, 5th Aug. 1849, *CL* 24:173-175.

England and a new Scotland'.¹⁴⁸⁵ Returning to England, Carlyle wrote that:

great seeds of improvements are visibly sown: the next generation of Irishmen may fairly hope to be ahead of any of its predecessors,—nearer to a level with Englishⁿ than has ever been the case before.¹⁴⁸⁶

Thus, shades of Carlyle's youthful belief in a universal schema of historical progress, through which all peoples were destined to pass, still continued to linger. However, Carlyle also noted that such endeavours relied upon support from central government, writing in his diary that "Society' *here* would have to eat itself, and end by cannibalism in a week, if it were not held up by the rest of our empire'.¹⁴⁸⁷ In this sense, 'revolting' would not 'profit' the Irish, who would be better advised to cooperate with the British government.¹⁴⁸⁸ As Carlyle put it: 'Before “dying” for your country, think, my friends, in how many quiet strenuous ways you might beneficially live for it'.¹⁴⁸⁹ Indeed, as Morrow points out, Carlyle's arguments seemed to have had a considerable effect on Duffy and his fellow repealers. Like Carlyle, Duffy now came to believe that purely political reform would not solve the economic and social problems of Ireland, which would require economic and social solutions.¹⁴⁹⁰ However, it is worth adding that Duffy, in making these points, also echoed various Saint-Simonian theories regarding industrialism, critical and organic eras, and the organisation of labour, which he would have absorbed second-hand from Carlyle. For instance, in an article entitled, 'Wanted, a Few Workmen', published in the Irish nationalist newspaper the *Nation* on 19th September 1849, Duffy declared: 'Although we begin our work in the midst of social disorganization, our main task is not to combat and resist, but to found and create'. To this end, he then claimed that Ireland needed not 'idle politicians', but rather a 'Minister of Public Works and Industrial Progress'.¹⁴⁹¹

THE 'NEGRO QUESTION' AND THE 'CONDITION-OF-ENGLAND' (1833-1843)

Having dealt with Carlyle's writings on Ireland at some length, it is now necessary to turn to the notorious 'Negro Question'. As noted in the introduction, this subject has tended to dominate the

1485TC to Lord Clarendon. 5th Aug. 1849, *CL* 24:173-175.

1486TC to W. E. Forster, 24th July 1849, *CL* 24:144.

1487*Irish Journey*, 179-180.

1488*Irish Journey*, 34.

1489'Trees of Liberty', [1st Dec 1849], in *Rescued Essays*, 110.

1490Morrow, 'Thomas Carlyle, 'Young Ireland', 665.

1491Duffy, 'Wanted A Few Workmen', in *The Nation* (29th Sep. 1849). Also reprinted in *Conversations with Carlyle*, 134-145.

secondary literature, to the point of obscuring the other aspects of Carlyle's imperial thought, such as those discussed above. In the following section, I do not wish to become bogged down in the question of whether or not Carlyle was 'racist', a 'biological racist', or a 'cultural racist', though this will be touched upon in passing. Instead, I want to situate Carlyle's writings on the 'Negro Question' against the background of his wider imperial thought, and to suggest that, even here, many of the universal, progressive, and 'civilisational' themes discussed above continued to linger. In making this point, I will also revisit the famous Carlyle-Mill debate, suggesting that, if we move beyond Mill's article in *Fraser's Magazine* to some of his other writings, it becomes apparent that the two men in fact had far more in common than has hitherto been surmised.

Before moving on to look at Carlyle's 'Occasional Discourse' of 1849, it will be useful to briefly survey some of Carlyle's earlier statements on the issue, particularly during the 1830s and 1840s. Paradoxically, the most important thing to note at the outset of a discussion of Carlyle's interest in the 'Negro Question', is that he had no great interest in the 'Negro Question'. During the 1830s, Carlyle's opinions regarding black slavery and abolition were framed, if not outright determined, by his growing preoccupation with the 'Condition-of-England question', or what Saint-Simon had called the 'moral and physical condition of the poorest class'.¹⁴⁹² In 1833, Carlyle informed Mill of a lecture that had recently been delivered in London by an American abolitionist, adding: 'While we, under soft names, have not only Slavery but the fiercest *Maroon War* going on under our very noses, it seems to me Philanthropy and Eleutheromany might find work nearer home'.¹⁴⁹³ Indeed, Carlyle seems to have become more and more infuriated by abolitionism. According to Henry Crabb Robinson, Carlyle, in a conversation that took place on 25th November 1837, expressed his 'appropriation of the annexation of Texas and of the holding the negroes in slavery'.¹⁴⁹⁴ Assuming Crabb Robinson's testimony to be accurate, this outburst might simply be taken as proof of Carlyle 'racism', at least regarding blacks. However, a more probable explanation is Carlyle's conviction that the energies of abolitionists would be better expended on ameliorating the condition of the working classes of England, and his mounting exasperation at what he perceived to be the hypocrisy of middle-class abolitionism. Indeed, in 'Chartism', published two years later, in 1839, Carlyle stated the 'claim of the Free Working-man to be raised to a level, we may say, with the Working Slave... Food, shelter, due guidance, in return for his labour'.¹⁴⁹⁵ This tends to add weight to Gillian

1492 *Nouveau Christianisme, dialogues entre un conservateur et un novateur* (Paris: Bossange Père and A. Sautet et Cie., 1825), 26.

1493 TC to JSM, 21st Mar. 1833, *CL* 6:351.

1494 *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, ed. Edith J. Morley (London, 1938), II:541–542, cited in *CL* 9:368.

1495 'Chartism', 169. Two years later, Carlyle made a similar point, writing: 'Black slaves in South Carolina, I do

Workman's conclusion that Carlyle's interest in black slavery and abolitionism 'existed only in so far as it helped him to make a point about the condition of England'.¹⁴⁹⁶ Workman's thesis has recently been challenged by Jude Nixon, who argues that Workman wrongly sought to rehabilitate 'Carlyle's racist and elitist character by situating it within the larger context of the condition of England question'.¹⁴⁹⁷ However, Nixon does not explain what is wrong with this approach. Indeed, if such a 'larger context' did indeed exist, then it seems to me that Workman, in the interests of historical understanding, was quite right to reconstruct it. And it did exist. According to Nixon, Carlyle was 'strikingly out of touch with what keen observers of nineteenth-century culture consider the most pressing moral agenda: abolition, emancipation, and overall black suffrage'.¹⁴⁹⁸ However, many contemporaries clearly did not share the opinions of such 'keen observers of nineteenth-century culture'. This is particularly true of the Owenites, the Chartists, and other popular radicals. Upon returning from a visit to the British West Indies in 1829, Owen remarked that its slaves were generally more comfortable than Irish or English day-labourers. Indeed, as Gregory Claeys notes, 'such comparisons' were 'a commonplace in the rhetoric of factory reformers like Oastler, Fielden and Bull, as well as Chartists like O'Connor, who, following the successes of Wilberforce, Clarkson and others in securing the abolition of slavery in the British empire, found the idea of "white slavery" to be a powerful symbol of the degradation of free-born British operatives'.¹⁴⁹⁹ This is exactly what Carlyle was doing in 'Chartism', and exactly what he would continue to do in his later writings. Moreover, during the 1830s (the decade in which Carlyle made the above pronouncements), many spokesmen of popular radicalism came to perceive the conservative impact of 'abolitionism', particularly the way in which it drew attention away from the sufferings of the 'free' working classes, and contributed to a culture of middle-class complacency.¹⁵⁰⁰ In this sense, Carlyle belonged to a much larger group of radical and socialist writers, for whom the issues of black slavery and abolition were subordinate to efforts to improve the condition of the working classes at home. Of course, we might not agree with this judgement. However, it was commonly made, and Carlyle's writings on the 'Negro Question' need to be understood in this wider context. Indeed, in 1840, Carlyle, having received a visit from 'certain American Women', wrote to his mother:

believe, deserve pity enough; but the Black is at least not stranded, cast ashore, from the stream of human interests, and left to perish there: he is connected with human interests, *belongs* to those above him, if only as a slave' (TC to Thomas Chalmers, 11th Oct. 1841, *CL* 13:274-276).

1496 Workman, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy', 82.

1497 Nixon, 'Racialism and the Politics of Emancipation', 104.

1498 Nixon, 'Racialism and the Politics of Emancipation', 90.

1499 Gregory Claeys, *Citizens and Saints: Politics and Anti-Politics in Early British Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 97.

1500 Colley, *Britons*, 358-369.

I would not crusade with them in favour of the black slaves, as the one thing needful; I told them, as usual, that the *green* and *yellow* slaves, grown green with sheer hunger in my own neighbourhood, were far more interesting to me!¹⁵⁰¹

Three years later, in *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle once again questioned the priorities of the abolitionist movement, arguing that 'the hunger-stricken, pallid, *yellow*-coloured "Free Labourers"' of Britain ought to come before 'black Quashee over the seas'.¹⁵⁰²

THE 'NEGRO QUESTION' BEFORE THE 'OCCASIONAL DISCOURSE' (1832-1848)

As noted above, Gillian Workman claimed that Carlyle's interest in black slavery and abolitionism 'existed *only* in so far as it helped him to make a point about the condition of England'.¹⁵⁰³ While, as the above section has made clear, there is much truth to this conclusion, it is perhaps slightly overstated. Indeed, it might be more accurate to say that Carlyle's interest 'existed *primarily* in so far as it helped him to make a point about the condition of England'. The condition of England aside, Carlyle did at times touch upon the 'Negro Question' as an issue in its own right, albeit very rarely. According to Catherine Hall, Carlyle believed that 'whites and negroes were not the same species'.¹⁵⁰⁴ However, the statements made by Carlyle prior to the publication of the 'Occasional Discourse' suggest that this is somewhat wide of the mark. As noted above, the young Carlyle, in his entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, had drawn upon the Scottish Enlightenment's 'four stages' theory of historical progress. According to this theory, which was considered to be universally applicable, all peoples were destined to progress through the same stages of 'savagery', 'barbarism', 'agriculture', and, finally, 'commerce' or 'civilisation'. However, in the writings of the Saint-Simonians (as well as, to some extent, in the series of letters to the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* by 'Presbyter'), Carlyle encountered the argument that progress could not be left to the spontaneous development of commerce, but rather needed to be consciously guided and governed. In an unpublished review of Augustus Earle's *Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand* (1832), written shortly after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle deplored the 'disregard of life' that characterised the 'savage state'. However, he then added, with reference to the indigenous population: 'Mr. Earle loves these people... a few men like him would do much to civilise them'.¹⁵⁰⁵

¹⁵⁰¹TC to Margaret A. Carlyle, 12th Sep, 1840, CL 12:252-254.

¹⁵⁰²*Past and Present*, 267.

¹⁵⁰³Workman, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy', 82, emphasis added.

¹⁵⁰⁴Hall, 'The Economy of Intellectual Prestige', 189.

¹⁵⁰⁵'Unpublished Manuscripts I: Carlyle Among the Cannibals', ed. Fielding, in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 1 (1979), 25-26.

The terms 'savage' and 'civilise' seem to suggest an ongoing debt to the 'four stages' theory, and, moreover, Carlyle appears to have assumed that it was, at least in principle, possible to 'civilise' black people. Moreover, as the following passage from *Past and Present* (1843) makes clear, Carlyle certainly did not consider 'Blacks' to be a different species. Here, Carlyle opened with a reference to the Scottish explorer Mungo Park, whose entry in the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* he had written some twenty years ago.¹⁵⁰⁶ Carlyle wrote:

Park, resourceless, had sunk down to die under the Negro Village-Tree, a horrible White object in the eyes of all. But in the poor Black Woman, and her daughter who stood aghast at him, whose earthly wealth and funded capital consisted of one small calabash of rice, there lived a heart richer than '*Laissez-faire*:' ... "Let us pity the poor white man; no mother has he to fetch him milk, no sister to grind him corn!" Thou poor black Noble One, - thou *Lady* too: did not a God make thee too; was there not in thee too something of a God!¹⁵⁰⁷

Furthermore, as noted above, Carlyle had around this time sympathised with the sufferings of the 'poor black men' used as slaves in the gold mines of Spanish America.¹⁵⁰⁸ Moreover, in 'Dr. Francia', also published in 1843, Carlyle claimed that Francia had built upon two previous 'good, or partially good measures', namely, the 'clipping of the enormous bat-wings of the Clergy, and emancipating of the Slaves'.¹⁵⁰⁹ Such evidence suggests that Carlyle did not believe that blacks were 'another species', as Hall claimed. He not only considered them to be human, but also sympathised with the sufferings of black slaves, believed that blacks might in principle be 'civilised', and considered emancipation to be a 'good, or partially good' measure. In 1848, Carlyle made another noteworthy reference to a non-European people, this time not blacks, but native Americans. In 'Repeal of the Union', he wrote:

The Cherokees, Sioux, and Chactaws had [an] invitation given them, in the new continents two centuries ago. 'Can you, will you, O Noble Chactaws... join us in this heavy job of work we Yankee Englanders have got to do here? Will you learn to plough the ground, to do carpenting, and live peaceably, supporting yourselves peaceably in obedience to those above you?'... Alas! the answer was in the negative... and accordingly the Chactaws... are extinct... Noisy, turbulent, irreclaimable savagery cannot be 'protected'; it is doomed to be reclaimable

1506'Mungo Park', reprinted in *Montaigne and Other Essays*, 226-246.

1507*Past and Present*, 203-204.

1508*Historical Sketches of Notable Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I. and Charles I.* [written Oct. 1843 – early 1844], 147-148.

1509'Dr Francia', 8-9.

or to disappear.¹⁵¹⁰

Shocking as this passage might appear at first sight, it deserves a closer reading. Here, Carlyle suggests that 'savagery' is at least in principle 'reclaimable'. Moreover, he also suggests that the Chactaws might have answered in the positive, learning 'to plough the ground, to do carpenting, and [to] live peaceably', joining the 'Yankee Englanders' in their 'heavy job of work'. Carlyle's argument is certainly Eurocentric, elitist, authoritarian, and imperialist; but it is not necessarily 'racist', and is at least potentially universal, suggesting that non-European peoples might be civilised through habits of 'work' and 'obedience'. Indeed, in the same article, Carlyle put forward an identical argument regarding Irish paupers (as discussed above), and, in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), he would extend these proposals to England (as discussed in the previous chapter). In this sense, the Chactaws were to be subject to the same authoritarian organisation of labour as everyone else, including Europeans.

THE 'OCCASSIONAL DISCOURSE', AND AFTER

Following his visit to Ireland during the summer of 1849, Carlyle returned to Britain. Thanks to the research of Aileen Christiansen, we now know that Carlyle's readings over the subsequent months included a number of works dealing with the condition of the British West Indies, where slavery had been abolished in 1833.¹⁵¹¹ On 3rd September, Carlyle informed his wife that 'Lyell's *America* is here for me'.¹⁵¹² As Christiansen points out, this was most likely Charles Lyell's *Travels in North America* (1845). Here, Lyell had explained how former slaves were increasingly eschewing wage-labour on sugar and coffee plantations, in favour of subsistence agriculture.¹⁵¹³ Moreover, as Christiansen points out, Carlyle probably read an article that appeared in the *Times* on 25th September, dealing with Cayenne, the capital of French Guiana. This informed readers that

agriculture is almost entirely abandoned [in Cayenne], - the former labourers lead an idle, listless, vagabond life, and, so far as they have need for their own personal wants, provide by hunting and fishing for the most necessary claims of nature. In consequence of the cessation of labour the plantations are going down day by day more and more to decay.

1510'The Repeal of the Union', 49-52.

1511Aileen Christiansen, 'On the Writing of the "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question"', in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 2 (1980), 13-19.

1512TC to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 3rd Sep. 1849, *CL* 24: 215-216.

1513Charles Lyell, *Travels in North America* (1845), I:120, cited in Christiansen, 15-16.

The same edition of the *Times* also reported on public meetings that had been held in the British West Indies, in order to urge the British government to compel Spain and Brazil to suppress their slave trades. This would serve to remove the unfair advantage that the latter currently enjoyed over British plantations, which no longer had access to slave labour.¹⁵¹⁴ As Christiansen notes, all of these details featured in Carlyle's 'Occasional Discourse', which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in December. Clearly, then, the debate over the fate of the British West Indies constituted one context of Carlyle's article.¹⁵¹⁵ However, as this section will suggest, it was neither the only context, nor the most important context. Indeed, Carlyle only engaged with the condition of the West Indies at an extremely superficial level, using it primarily as a means to make polemical points about the shortcomings of *laissez-faire* in England and Ireland, and to reiterate his calls for an organisation of labour.¹⁵¹⁶ As noted above, Carlyle had already employed this technique on multiple occasions in his earlier writings and correspondence. Furthermore, the tendency of scholars to read the 'Occasional Discourse' in isolation from Carlyle's other writings, and to comb it for confirmation of Carlyle's 'racism', has served to exaggerate the novelty of its arguments. Insofar as Carlyle dealt with the West Indies in their own right (which was not very far at all), it was to repeat the same Saint-Simonian ideas regarding industrialism, critical and organic eras, and the organisation of labour, which he had already applied to England (as discussed in previous chapters), and to Ireland (as discussed above). Despite the use of 'racial stereotyping' that modern readers find 'offensive' (and here, Carlyle undeniably echoed many common racial prejudices),¹⁵¹⁷ Carlyle's proposals for the blacks of the West Indies were substantially the same as his proposals for the paupers of England and Ireland.

In reading the 'Occasional Discourse', it is important to bear in mind the fact that Carlyle had spent the previous five years reading and writing about Ireland, and had only recently returned from an extended visit to that country. Immediately after his return from Ireland, and four months before the publication of the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle wrote to Emerson, regarding the American abolitionist movement:

the Emancipation Societies should send over a deputation or two to look at *these* immortal

¹⁵¹⁴Cited in Christiansen, 16.

¹⁵¹⁵This context is strongly emphasised by Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 124-125, in my view excessively.

¹⁵¹⁶As Workman argued some time ago: 'Carlyle was never to examine the condition of the West Indies as such. He simply assumed that a vivid parallel with Britain existed, and he described West Indian events and conditions (as he understood them) in such a way as to teach a lesson to England' ('Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy', 82).

¹⁵¹⁷The words are those of Chris R. Vanden Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 133.

Irish “Free men,” the *ne-plus-ultra* of their class: it would perhaps moderate the windpipe of much eloquence one hears on that subject!¹⁵¹⁸

In the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle repeated this point. Regarding Britain, he asked why abolitionists did not first get their own house in order, remarking: 'at home too, the British Whites are rather badly off; several millions of them hanging on the verge of continual famine'.¹⁵¹⁹ Shortly thereafter, Carlyle suggested that a system of 'free' labour risked 'emancipating' 'the West Indies into a *Black Ireland*'.¹⁵²⁰ As we have seen, this was an old technique that Carlyle had already employed in 'Chartism' and *Past and Present*. Indeed, at least one contemporary reviewer perceived Carlyle's intention clearly enough, writing:

There are thousands, nay millions of men in Britain and Ireland, whose lot, compared with that of the emancipated Blacks of Jamaica, is one of speechless misery – and yet their cry to be relieved from a competition which is crushing them down to the dust, is unheard and uncared for amidst the din of contending politicians, and the perpetual hum of the busy proselytes of Mammon.¹⁵²¹

Moreover, as Gillian Workman pointed out, Carlyle employed the same technique in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* early the following year.¹⁵²² Here, Carlyle referred not to the West Indies, but rather to the so-called 'Don Pacifico Affair'. In 1847, Don Pacifico, a British subject born in Gibraltar, had been working in Athens, where an anti-Semitic mob attacked and vandalised his house. The Greek government having refused to pay Pacifico compensation, he appealed to the British government, which sent the Royal Navy to blockade Piraeus, the port of Athens. In the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle ridiculed the British government for wasting time on Don Pacifico, 'the miraculous Gibraltar Jew', when it should have been doing something to solve the problem of pauperism at home.¹⁵²³ In the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle made a superficial reference to the West Indies, in order to make a substantial point about pauperism in Britain and Ireland; in the *Pamphlets*, he made a superficial reference to Don Pacifico, in order to make exactly the same substantial point. Throughout,

¹⁵¹⁸TC to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 13th Aug. 1849, *CL* 24:193.

¹⁵¹⁹'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XL (Dec. 1849), 670.

¹⁵²⁰'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 672.

¹⁵²¹William Edmonstone Aytoun, 'Latter-Day Pamphlets', in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXVII (June 1850), 641-658 (654-655). As has been seen in the previous two chapters, this review was otherwise extremely hostile to Carlyle.

¹⁵²²Workman, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy', 82.

¹⁵²³'Downing Street' [Apr. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter*; Copyright edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1897), 99.

Carlyle's priority remained the 'Condition-of-England question', as had been the case in 'Chartism' and *Past and Present*.

Insofar as Carlyle dealt with the West Indies in their own right, it was merely to repeat proposals regarding the organisation of labour that he had already made with reference to Britain and Ireland.¹⁵²⁴ According to David Theo Goldberg, Carlyle's 'Occasional Discourse' was a 'call to reinstitute slavery'.¹⁵²⁵ This is nonsense. As we have seen, Carlyle had already described the abolition of slavery in Paraguay as a 'good, or partially good' measure.¹⁵²⁶ In the 'Occasional Discourse' itself, Carlyle condemned the system of slavery that had previously existed in the British West Indies, writing of 'our unfairness towards the enslaved black man'. Moreover, he then informed his imagined audience of former slaves: 'You are not “slaves” now; nor do I wish, if it can be avoided, to see you slaves again'.¹⁵²⁷ Furthermore, he declared the 'buying of black war-captives in Africa, and bringing them over to the sugar-islands for sale again', to be 'a contradiction of the laws of this universe', and called upon the navy to 'suppress the slave-trade' in Brazil and Cuba.¹⁵²⁸ Rather than seeking to reinstitute old forms of slavery, Carlyle looked forward to a new 'Organisation of Labour' for the West Indies, just as he did for England and Ireland.¹⁵²⁹ Asking whether 'in all human things, the “contract of long continuance” is not precisely the contract to be desired', Carlyle wrote:

I incessantly pray heaven, all men, *the whitest alike and the blackest*, the richest and the poorest, in other regions of the world, had attained... the divine right of being compelled... to do what work they are appointed for, and not to go idle another minute.... Alas, we had then a perfect world... and true 'Organisation of Labour'.¹⁵³⁰

Elsewhere in the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle wrote that it was 'the everlasting duty' of every man, '*black or white*', 'to do competent work for his living', and, in the case that he should choose not to, it was also his 'indisputable and perpetual *right* to be compelled'.¹⁵³¹ All Carlyle was doing

¹⁵²⁴As Park correctly pointed out: 'By no means did Carlyle confine his advocacy of regimentation to blacks. In an 1848 *Spectator* article... Carlyle called for a quasi-military organization of the Irish poor to be employed as industrial armies for land reclamation. In *Past and Present*, he had urged a similar conscription of British workers and the unemployed into industrial armies' ('John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, and the U. S. Civil War', 100).

¹⁵²⁵Goldberg, 'Liberalism's limits: Carlyle and Mill on “the negro question”', 208.

¹⁵²⁶'Dr Francia', 8-9.

¹⁵²⁷'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 676.

¹⁵²⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁵²⁹A similar point is made by Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle*, 489-490.

¹⁵³⁰'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 674, 677, emphasis added.

¹⁵³¹'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 673, emphasis added.

here was extending his proposals for an authoritarian 'Organisation of Labour' from England and Ireland to the West Indies. 'The thing', he wrote, 'must be done everywhere'.¹⁵³² In this sense, the 'Occasional Discourse' was not particularly original.

In the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle argued that the ultimate 'proprietorship' of the West Indies belonged to 'him who can the *best* educe from them whatever of noble produce they were created fit for yielding'.¹⁵³³ This claim was of course far from novel, having had a long history in providing a justification for empire. As Pagden notes, during the seventeenth century, the British had sought to legitimize their early settlements in North America in terms of the Roman Law argument known as *res nullius*, according to which all 'empty things', including unoccupied lands, remained the common property of mankind, until put to some kind of agricultural use. The first person to use the land in such a way became its owner. As John Locke famously put it in his *Second Treatise* (1689), he who "mixed his Labour" with the land, became its proprietor.¹⁵³⁴ Moreover, as Pocock points out, this theory later provided a basis for Enlightenment narratives of progress, in which cultivation lead to property, rights, and laws, which in turn lead to the exchange of surplus produce and to commerce, finally resulting in the development of the arts and sciences, as well as 'politeness' and 'manners'.¹⁵³⁵ The young Carlyle had 'thought and pondered over' Locke, who furnished him 'with matter for many and profound reflections',¹⁵³⁶ and, as noted above, had later immersed himself in seventeenth-century sources during the preparation of *Cromwell* (1845). Moreover, as we have seen, he was also familiar with the relevant theories of the Scottish Enlightenment, having used these as the basis for his entries to the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*. In the 'Occasional Discourse', as in Carlyle's writings on Ireland, these progressive, civilisational themes continued to linger. As Carlyle made clear, cultivation of the land was only a beginning. He wrote:

1532'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 676.

1533'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 674.

1534Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 76-79.

1535Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 166-170.

1536TC to John A. Carlyle, 24th June 1823, *CL* 2:382-386. Carlyle had earlier remarked: 'Locke's writings I suppose are getting nearer to the region of truisms - in the progress of a century' (TC to Matthew Allen, 7th June 1820, *CL* 1:259-263). However, as David Armitage has recently pointed out, Locke's reputation as a labour theorist of empire was partly due to the way in which later authors, particularly Emer de Vattel, excerpted and appropriated his arguments. In his *Droit des Gens* (1758), Vattel wrote: "[peoples who] to avoid labour, chuse to live only by hunting, and their flocks... [and to pursue an] idle mode of life, usurp more extensive territories than... they would have occasion for, and have therefore no reason to complain, if other nations, more industrious, and too closely confined, come to take possession of a part of those lands" (Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, ed. B. Kapossy and R. Whatmore, Indianapolis, 2008, 129-130, cited in Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought*, 125, 128-129). In *Frederick the Great*, Carlyle referred to 'young Vattel, afterwards of the *Droit des Gens*', which suggests he knew the work. See *History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* [1858-1865]. Copyright edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), V:109.

The Islands are good withal for pepper, for sugar, for sago, arrow-root, for coffee, perhaps for cinnamon and precious spices; things far nobler than pumpkins; and leading towards commerces, arts, politics and social developments, which alone are the noble product, where men (and not pigs with pumpkins) are the parties concerned!¹⁵³⁷

As Carlyle made clear, the 'English' were, as things stood, '*best*' able to initiate and manage this process, and thus had, for the moment, a just claim to 'command black men, and produce West Indian fruitfulness by means of them'.¹⁵³⁸ An important question is whether Carlyle considered this to be a permanent state of affairs (i.e., that blacks were inherently inferior and would always need to be commanded), or merely temporary (i.e. that blacks might be 'civilised' in the course of this process, and thus one day become candidates for emancipation). In this regard, Carlyle's imperial thought reproduced many of the tensions and inconsistencies that characterised his domestic thought. As was seen in the previous chapter, Carlyle, particularly in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), at times branded English paupers and criminals as 'slaves by nature'. However, even in the same work, he often made a very different argument, suggesting that, once initiated into habits of industry, order, and obedience by an authoritarian organisation of labour, these English paupers might one day become fit for freedom. In Carlyle's writings on non-European peoples in general, and on the 'Negro Question' in particular, the evidence is similarly contradictory. In 1832, Carlyle had believed that the indigenous population of New Zealand might one day be 'civilised', and, in 1848, he suggested that the 'savagery' of the Chactaws might possibly have been 'overcome'. However, in the 'Occasional Discourse', he informed the blacks of the West Indies:

you will have to be servants to those that are born *wiser* than you, that are born lords of you; servants to the Whites, if they *are* (as what mortal can doubt they are?) born wiser than you.¹⁵³⁹

Historians have seized on this sentence, adducing it as decisive proof of Carlyle's belief that 'Blacks' were 'inherently inferior to whites in intellect and moral character', and 'thus in need of perpetual guidance and control by white mentors'.¹⁵⁴⁰ At first sight, this does indeed seem to be the

¹⁵³⁷'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 674.

¹⁵³⁸Ibid.

¹⁵³⁹'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', 676-677.

¹⁵⁴⁰Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 125. Morrow makes by far the most detailed and convincing case in this regard, but practically all of the critics referred to in the introduction also cite this sentence. For instance, Hall cites it as proof that Carlyle believed that 'blacks were an inferior race' ('The Economy of Intellectual Prestige', 178). Similarly, Nixon claims that the 'Occasional Discourse' 'romanticizes, even advocates, imperialism and racial hegemony of whites over blacks *incapable* of self-government or self-determination' ('Racialism and the Politics of Emancipation

implication. However, it is worth noting that the 'if' and the parenthetical demand introduce a degree of ambiguity, as does the generally playful, ironic tone of the 'Occasional Discourse' (it was, after all, intended to be humorous, a quality of which many later commentators seem curiously bereft). More importantly, following the controversy that followed the publication of the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle explicitly and publicly repudiated the idea that blacks were inherently and perpetually inferior, as we shall see in the discussion of the revised edition of 1853.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, it is generally assumed that Mill's riposte to Carlyle, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in January 1850, was founded on a series of universal, humanitarian, progressive assumptions, diametrically opposed to the callous 'racialism' of Carlyle.¹⁵⁴¹ For instance, according to John Morrow, Mill's article 'was totally at odds with the harsh and authoritarian prescriptions of the 'Occasional Discourse' and with the unwarranted assumptions of permanent and chronic inferiority that underwrote them'.¹⁵⁴² This is indeed the picture that emerges at first sight. For instance, in his article, Mill condemned Carlyle's insinuation that 'Whites' were the 'born lords' of blacks, describing this as a 'damnable' doctrine.¹⁵⁴³ However, upon closer examination, a more nuanced picture emerges. Mill began his article lamenting Carlyle's superheated rhetoric, and ended it pointing out the untimeliness of the latter's intervention. According to Mill, Carlyle's article would without doubt be appropriated by pro-slavery interests in the United States, and he had thus 'made himself an instrument' of the devil's work.¹⁵⁴⁴ As this implies, Mill understood that Carlyle did not support slavery in its existing form, nor did he believe that 'blacks' were inherently inferior. However, carried away by his own rhetoric, he had inadvertently 'made himself an instrument' of those who did. Moreover, if we turn to some of Mill's other writings published around this time, particularly the first edition of his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), it becomes clear that he in fact shared many of Carlyle's assumptions. For instance, as pointed out above, Carlyle had, in the 'Occasional Discourse', used black slavery primarily as a means to make a point about the sufferings of 'free' labour in Ireland. In his riposte, Mill recognised Carlyle's intention, while claiming that 'it is a mockery to talk of comparing it [slavery] with Ireland'.¹⁵⁴⁵ However, what Mill did not mention was that he himself had written, in his *Principles of Political Economy*: 'no slave labourers are worse fed, clothed, or lodged, than the

in Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question", 94, emphasis added).

1541E.g. Hall, 'The Economy of Intellectual Prestige', 178-181, 189, 194, 196; Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 378-379; Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 151-157; Varouxakis, *Victorian Political Thought on France and the French*, 105-112.

1542Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 130.

1543Mill, 'The Negro Question', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XLI (Jan., 1850), 29.

1544Mill, 'The Negro Question', 31.

1545Mill, 'The Negro Question', 26.

free peasantry of Ireland'.¹⁵⁴⁶ Prompted by the appearance of Carlyle's article, Mill seems to have realised that such arguments played into the hands of pro-slavery interests, and the passage was promptly deleted, no longer featuring in subsequent editions.¹⁵⁴⁷ However, as this suggests, the two men did not differ to the extent that historians have claimed. Indeed, in another passage of the *Principles*, Mill had gone so far as to offer a 'civilisational' justification for the 'lash', writing:

It is true that in some circumstances, human beings can be driven by the lash to attempt, and even to accomplish, things which they would not have undertaken... And it is likely that productive operations which require much combination of labour, the production of sugar for example, would not have taken place so soon in the American colonies, if slavery had not existed to keep masses of labour together. There are also savage tribes so averse from regular industry, that industrial life is scarcely able to introduce itself among them until they are either conquered or made slaves of.¹⁵⁴⁸

This seems highly similar to the arguments that Carlyle made in the 'Occasional Discourse'. Indeed, having read and annotated these passages of Mill's *Principles*, it is perhaps unsurprising that Carlyle could not at first figure out the identity of his anonymous critic.¹⁵⁴⁹ However, it might still be argued that for Mill, such authoritarian measures were only temporary, whereas for Carlyle, they were intended to be permanent.¹⁵⁵⁰ But such strong claims do not quite stand up in the face of the evidence. Following the publication of the 'Occasional Discourse', Mill's prediction came true, and Carlyle found himself deluged with letters of support from the slave states of America.¹⁵⁵¹ This was not the effect Carlyle had intended, and he felt moved to protest, writing to one such correspondent:

¹⁵⁴⁶Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London: J. W. Parker, 1848), I:294.

¹⁵⁴⁷For instance, it did not feature in the 3rd edition (London: John W. Parker, 1852), I:301.

¹⁵⁴⁸Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London: J. W. Parker, 1848), I:294-295. This passage remained unchanged in the 3rd edition (London: John W. Parker, 1852), I:302.

¹⁵⁴⁹Carlyle's copy of the 1848 edition of the *Principles* is preserved in the Strouse Endowment for Thomas Carlyle, University of California Santa Cruz. See also 'In the Margins: Carlyle's Markings and Annotations in his Gift Copy of Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, first edition, London, J. W. Parker, 1848, two volumes', ed. Baumgarten, in *Carlyle: Books and Margins* (Santa Cruz CA: University of California Press, 1980), 66-106. Next to the passages cited above, Carlyle wrote: 'No sugar can be had from the free W. Indies now (a.d. 1848); and the question has risen again for solution, a hungrier fact than ever!' (note to Vol. I, Book II, ch. V, § 3, in Baumgarten). Having read Mill's article in *Fraser's*, Carlyle wrote: 'An attack on my *Negro Question* is of very slender structure,—I do not in the least know by whom. By some "man of mark," Forster says the Newspapers say; by some poor hidebound dunce, I have no hesitation in replying' (TC to John A. Carlyle, 9th Jan. 1850, CL 25:1-3).

¹⁵⁵⁰This is the argument of Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 130. In the above passage of the *Principles*, Mill made clear that 'slavery' was only justified as a temporary expedient, being 'incompatible with any high state of the arts of life'. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London: J. W. Parker, 1848), I:294-295. This passage remained unchanged in the 3rd edition (London: John W. Parker, 1852), I:302.

¹⁵⁵¹One southern editor added: 'When British writers can so speak, it is time for Northern fanaticism to pause and reflect' ('Carlyle on West India Emancipation', in *The Commercial Review*, VIII [June 1850], 527).

My notion is that the relation of the White man to the Black is *not* at present a just one according to the Law of the Eternal... Have you, for example, a law by which a Negro, on producing a certain sum of money possible for the thrift and foresight of a superior Negro, can *demand* his Freedom?¹⁵⁵²

As this suggests, Carlyle was willing to entertain the possibility that individual 'Negroes' might one day become fit for 'Freedom'. Similarly, the following year, in the *Life of John Sterling* (1851), Carlyle proposed 'universal Education to the Blacks, preparatory to emancipating them'.¹⁵⁵³ In 1853, Carlyle published a revised edition of the 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', changing its title to *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*. According to Jude Nixon, the effect of the word "Nigger" was to consign 'the Negro to an unchanging and intractable social status within Carlyle's pyramidal racial hierarchy'.¹⁵⁵⁴ However, if we look closely at the new additions to the revised edition, it becomes clear that something very different was going on. Here, Carlyle repeated the proposal he had made to his American correspondent, asking:

ought there not to be in every Slave State, a fixed legal sum, on paying which, any Black man was entitled to demand his freedom?... If the poor Black can, by forethought, industry, self-denial, accumulate this sum, has he not proved the actual 'freedom' of his soul... in God's name, why will you keep his body captive?¹⁵⁵⁵

Here, Carlyle followed the same line of reasoning he had employed in his writings on the 'Organisation of Labour' in England. In both cases, the condition of emancipation was held to be the same, namely, the attainment of self-mastery. According to John Morrow, such proposals 'were designed to strengthen and purify paternalism, not to inaugurate general emancipation'.¹⁵⁵⁶ However, this is not necessarily the point. Even if Carlyle envisaged the emancipation of only a small number of individual 'Blacks', then Morrow's claim that Carlyle considered 'Blacks' to be '*inherently* inferior to whites', and 'thus in need of *perpetual* guidance and control by white mentors', falls to the ground.¹⁵⁵⁷ Thus, alongside the all-pervasive racial prejudice and stereotyping of the 'Occasional Discourse', certain universal, progressive, and civilisationist arguments continued to remain in play.

1552TC to N. Beverly Tucker, 21st Oct. 1850, *CL* 25:264.

1553*The Life of John Sterling* [1851], Oxford World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 96.

1554Nixon, 'Racialism and the Politics of Emancipation in Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question"', 90. Cf. Heffer, who suggests that the change in title was 'a gesture' of Carlyle's 'unshakeable belief in its doctrines' (*Moral Desperado*, 275).

1555*Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question* (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1853), 33.

1556Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 129.

1557Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle*, 125.

In this sense, Carlyle was, at least at times, willing to go along with Mill's argument that authoritarian rule ought to be a temporary expedient, designed to quicken the pace of progress and bring dominated peoples to eventual self-rule, rather than a permanent or perpetual arrangement.¹⁵⁵⁸ As we have seen in the previous chapter, Carlyle had, at times, adopted the same position in relation to the 'Organisation of Labour' in England.¹⁵⁵⁹

Up to now, the argument of the current section has been tortuous enough. This is because Carlyle's argument in the 'Negro Question' was itself tortuous, not to mention self-contradictory. Before concluding this section, one final contradiction needs to be mentioned. Some fifteen years later, in the wake of the Jamaican rebellion (1865) and the so-called 'Governor Eyre Controversy', Carlyle briefly returned to the 'Negro Question' in an article entitled 'Shooting Niagara' (1867). Here, Carlyle appears to have gone back on the conciliatory position of the revised edition of the 'Occasional Discourse', declaring:

One always rather likes the Nigger; evidently, a poor blockhead with good dispositions, with affections, attachments, - with a turn for Nigger Melodies, and the like: - he is the only Savage of all coloured races that doesn't die out on sight of the White Man: but can actually live beside him, and work and increase and be merry. The Almighty Maker has appointed him to be a Servant.¹⁵⁶⁰

We are thus back at the idea of the innate and perpetual inferiority of blacks. On any definition, this is a 'racist' argument. However, as before, Carlyle's racism continued to co-exist and intermingle with a number of other, often contradictory, opinions and concerns. First, this was a passing remark made in the course of a discussion of the 'Condition-of-England question', and it seems that, as in his earlier writings, the latter remained Carlyle's priority. Again, he used the 'Negro Question' primarily to make a point about the shortcomings of *laissez-faire* in Britain.¹⁵⁶¹ Explaining that 'the Nigger's case was not the most pressing in the world', Carlyle lamented: 'The fool of the world listens, year after year, for above a generation back, to 'disastrous *strikes*', 'merciless *lockouts*', and

1558As Georgios Varouxakis has recently put it, Mill's 'civilizational imperialism', 'had the *telos* of leading the dominated peoples to 'progress' and eventual independence' (*Liberty Abroad: J. S. Mill on International Relations* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 115).

1559In the revised edition, Carlyle wrote: 'In all human relations *permanency* is what I advocate... so and not otherwise would all reasonable mortals, Black and White, wish to hire and to be hired!' (*Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, 27).

1560'Shooting Niagara' [Aug. 1867], *CME* VII:203-205.

1561A point made by Campbell, 'Carlyle and the Negro Question Again', 280.

other details of the nomadic scheme of servitude'.¹⁵⁶² Second, Carlyle did not advocate an unchecked despotism of 'the White Man', but rather a system of mutual responsibilities, 'neither party' being permitted to 'neglect or misdo his duties therein'.¹⁵⁶³ However, he did not define the exact nature of these 'responsibilities' and 'duties', and his position thus contained some ambiguity. Third, as Gillian Workman pointed out, the 'Governor Eyre Controversy' involved a number of issues other than race, and participants on both sides were not necessarily motivated by their 'views about Negroes'.¹⁵⁶⁴ While Workman's claim that 'Carlyle's stand, as a member of the Eyre Defence Aid Fund Committee', was 'undetermined by the colour of those killed and harmed', is no doubt exaggerated, tending to ignore Carlyle's more self-evidently racist statements, it does contain a grain of truth. For instance, as a petition drawn up by Carlyle suggests, his support for Eyre was motivated at least in part by a more general concern for law and order. Carlyle 'humbly sheweth':

THAT, as is generally admitted, Governor EYRE, by his courageous, prompt, and skilful conduct, quenched down a Savage Insurrection in Jamaica, which threatened to envelope that Island in nameless horrors... THAT seditious Incendiaries, *of black-savage type or of white-savage*, risen without cause into open murderous Rebellion, are not the just objects of sympathy; and that the peaceable populations, whom they will drown in blood if their Guardians and Governors prevent not, are.¹⁵⁶⁵

The following year, in 1869, Carlyle relapsed into extreme racism in conversation, informing Charles Eliot Norton that Americans would soon 'be obliged to reduce [their] nagurs back into slavery, or else kill them off by massacre or starvation, for the lazy bein's won't work without a master, and your people will soon get tired o' supportin them'.¹⁵⁶⁶ However, only three years later, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist who had led a regiment of blacks in the Civil War, was able to report that Carlyle 'readily admitted' the

need of giving the ballot to the former slaves... and he at once volunteered the remark that in a republic they needed this, as the guarantee of their freedom. "You could do no less," he said, "for the men who had stood by you." I could scarcely convince my senses that this

¹⁵⁶²'Shooting Niagara', 203-205.

¹⁵⁶³'Shooting Niagara' [Aug. 1867], *CME* VII:203-205.

¹⁵⁶⁴Workman, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy', 80-81.

¹⁵⁶⁵'Petition to the House of Commons, drawn up by Thomas Carlyle' [Feb. 1868], emphasis added, in Workman, 'Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy', 98-99.

¹⁵⁶⁶*Letters of Charles Eliot Norton with Biographical Comment* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), I:337.

manly and reasonable critic was the terrible Carlyle, the hater of “Cuffee” and “Quashee”.¹⁵⁶⁷

In sum, Carlyle's pronouncements on the 'Negro Question' were inconsistent and self-contradictory. For the most part, Carlyle dealt with the question only insofar as it provided him with a pretext to rehearse his opinions regarding *laissez-faire* and the 'Condition-of-England question'. To the limited extent that he dealt with the 'Negro Question' in its own right, it was to recommend not so much the reintroduction of slavery, but rather the extension of the same 'Organisation of Labour' that he advocated for England and Ireland. In his writings on the organisation of labour abroad, Carlyle reproduced the tensions and inconsistencies that characterised his writings on the organisation of labour at home. At times, he presented blacks as 'slaves by nature', resorting in the process to all manner of crass racial stereotyping and abuse. However, in his more sober moments, he both publicly and privately suggested that an authoritarian organisation of labour, combined with education, might serve to inculcate habits of work and order in (at least some) blacks, enabling them to attain self-mastery, and to eventually be emancipated. Thus, alongside Carlyle's frequently crude racism, various universal and 'civilisationist' themes continued to resonate. As we shall see in the following section, this was no less true of the other aspects of his international thought, until now obscured by the notorious 'Negro Question'.

LATER IMPERIAL THOUGHT (1850-1858)

As has been noted in earlier sections, Carlyle, both before and after his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, had espoused a number of cosmopolitan ideals, particularly with regard to Europe. These had been underpinned by the earlier Scottish Enlightenment belief that commerce in material things would inevitably lead to commerce in spiritual things, softening manners, developing the arts and sciences, and ultimately putting an end to war. An excessive focus on the 'Occasional Discourse' has tended to obscure the fact that these themes continued to surface in Carlyle's contemporaneous writings, such as the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850). Here, Carlyle held out the prospect of European unification, writing:

really all Europe, now especially with so many railroads, public journals, printed books, penny-post, bills of exchange, and continual intercourse and mutual dependence, is more and more becoming (so to speak) one Parish; the Parishioners of which being, as we

¹⁵⁶⁷Higginson, *Carlyle's Laugh and Other Surprises* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 7.
Also cited in Park, 'John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, and the U. S. Civil War', 104-105.

ourselves are, in immense majority peaceable hard-working people, could, if they were moderately well guided, have almost no disposition to quarrel.¹⁵⁶⁸

The following year, upon being invited to attend the fourth 'Peace Congress' at Exeter Hall, Carlyle replied:

I altogether approve your object, heartily wish it entire success... in these times of banking, railwaying, printing, and penny-posting... every man's traffickings and labourings, and whatever industry he honestly and not dishonestly follows, do all very directly tend, whether he knows it or not, towards this good object.¹⁵⁶⁹

At the previous year's Peace Congress, Carlyle's opinions had been voiced by 'Mr. George Dawson, of Birmingham', who, according to the *Leader*, invoked 'Carlyle's idea of turning soldiers into labourers, and sending them, spade on shoulder, to subdue the bogs of Ireland'. In an address to the Congress, which 'elicited' the audience's 'hearty applause', Dawson explained that

He often admired the soldiers, but when ever he saw them he thought what giant works might have been achieved had the military been taught to perform some useful labour with the same regularity and skill as they displayed in their evolutions and exercises. Let them imagine a brigade armed with spades, in order to overcome the sterility of the enemy's ground – what wonders in cultivation and order might be brought to light! Europe's misfortune was her system of diplomacy, that mystery of trickery and concealment. The words of Napoleon must be realized, and our leaders of war become directors of industry, and the people one family.¹⁵⁷⁰

Here, the Saint-Simonian concept of a quasi-military organisation of labour, as appropriated and developed by Carlyle, provided a utopian vision of European unification through peaceful work.

In addition to European unification, the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* also proposed reforms of the British Empire that had nothing to do with the 'Negro Question', and have thus been overlooked by commentators. In particular, Carlyle continued to advocate what he had referred to in 'Chartism' as the 'grand Industrial task of conquering some half or more of this Terraqueous Planet'. In the

¹⁵⁶⁸'The New Downing Street', 132.

¹⁵⁶⁹TC to Henry Richard, 18th July 1851, *CL* 26:107-108.

¹⁵⁷⁰'The Peace Congress', in *The Leader* (31st Aug. 1850), 532

Pamphlets, Carlyle once again called for an organised system of emigration. 'England', he wrote, might look upon 'her Colonies can say':

Fertile continents still inhabited by wild beasts are mine, into which all the distressed populations of Europe might pour themselves, and make at once an Old World and a New World human... were our idle Seventy-fours all busy carrying out streams of British Industrials, and those Scoundrel Regiments all working, under divine drill-sergeants, at the grand Atlantic and Pacific Junction Railway, - poor Britain and her poor Colonies might find that they *had* true relations to each other: that the Imperial *Mother* and her constitutionally obedient Daughters were not a red-tape fiction... but a blessed God's-Fact destined to fill half the world with its fruits one day! ¹⁵⁷¹

As Duncan Bell has recently noted, by 'the late nineteenth century the settler colonies were often viewed as the product of the natural, even indubitable, diffusion of the English people across the 'unpopulated' or under-utilised spaces of the planet'. This 'view helped spawn the idea that the constituent units of the settlement empire could be seen both as a natural extension of the 'mother country' and as forming an organic whole'.¹⁵⁷² As the above citation suggests, Carlyle had already put forward such a vision some time earlier. Moreover, in doing so, he made another telling reference to Saint-Simonian industrialism ('British Industrials').

Moreover, in the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle also set out a series of proposals for how this empire might be governed and regulated. As noted in a previous chapter, Carlyle had, in the *Pamphlets*, reserved a sounding board role for 'democracy', arguing that representative assemblies would keep governors informed of popular opinion, and allow them to shape and modify their policies accordingly. In the *Pamphlets*, he extended these proposals to the Empire as a whole. In a manuscript of 1848, Carlyle had already contemplated the creation of a system of local parliaments, which would serve to relay knowledge and information to the central imperial authorities. He wrote:

subordinate centres of authority are good and indispensable in all commonwealths and indeed are pressingly wanted in our own at this time... local centres of guidance of subordinate authority and consultation are in the end indispensable for every empire; how otherwise can the admonition... [or] the practical experience felt at the extremity, reach the

¹⁵⁷¹'The New Downing Street', 142-146.

¹⁵⁷²Bell, 'The Victorian idea of a global state', 167-169.

vital head... and then transform itself into a sovereign command, to be transmitted again... to every extremity.

However, Carlyle also emphasised that 'there must be some grand centre of authority supreme over all these, unless the Nation itself is to die, and all the commonwealth reduced now to federal individualisms'.¹⁵⁷³ In the *Pamphlets*, Carlyle further developed these proposals, arguing that the empire ought to be meritocratic, open, and accessible to talent, wherever it might arise. In order to facilitate this, he proposed that the crown appoint in each colony an 'experienced, wise and valiant British man', who would convene a local parliament, consisting of such 'Collective Wisdom as he can gather round him'. Continuing, Carlyle held out the hope that by such means,

all manner of *true* relations, mutual interests and duties such as they do exist in fact between Mother Country and Colony, can be gradually developed into practical methods and results; and all manner of true and noble successes, and veracities in the way of governing, be won.¹⁵⁷⁴

Of course, Carlyle assumed that such measures would be limited to the settler colonies of the empire. However, given that the *Pamphlets* were widely read, it is worth asking whether Carlyle's proposals might not have contributed to later nineteenth-century visions of a 'Greater Britain', as recently discussed by Bell.¹⁵⁷⁵

However, the realities of the British Empire were increasingly out of step with Carlyle's utopian vision of a world united through peaceful work. In 1854, he described the Crimean War as 'one of the maddest wars lately heard of', his only opinion being that some way ought to be found of promptly 'terminating said war'.¹⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, during the so-called 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857, Carlyle laid the blame for the rebellion on the failings and maladministration of the British, just as he had previously done regarding Ireland. Despite his reputation as a rabid imperialist and racist, Carlyle refused to join in the chorus of revenge, writing to a correspondent that instead of seeking to 'punish

1573'The English Talent for Governing' [1848].

1574'The New Downing Street' [Apr. 1850], in *Latter-Day Pamphlets and Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter*, Copyright edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1897), 142-146.

1575See Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, and 'The Victorian idea of a global state'. In the latter piece, Bell refers to Seeley's idea of an 'Imperial Parliament' (167-169).

1576TC to James Marshall, 10th Dec. 1854, CL 29:214. In a manuscript written shortly thereafter, Carlyle surmised that the recent defeats of the British were due to the 'Fighting apparatus' having succumbed to the same 'Anarchy' as the other institutions of the state. See 'Constitutional Government like sawing of your Plank' [23rd Mar. 1855], ed. Trella, in *Carlyle Newsletter*, 9 (1988), 7-8.

the Sepoys, and mince them all to pieces &c &c', it would be 'far better if the English People thought of punishing themselves for the very great folly they have manifested there'.¹⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, in this sense, Carlyle's reaction to the brutal repression of the Mutiny appears to have been similar to that of John Stuart Mill. As Georgios Varouxakis has recently pointed out, Mill believed that if the empire was not pursuing its *telos* of 'progress' and improvement, then it had no justification.¹⁵⁷⁸ Carlyle seems to have concurred. Moreover, in a letter dated 1861, he claimed that he had once believed 'no Nation ever had such glorious opportunities of changing its nearly intolerable curses and choking *nightmares* into blessings and winged angels, as Great Britain in our day, by *Colonising*'. However, continuing, he explained that the British had squandered such opportunities, turning 'a totally deaf ear to all considerations of that or the like kind', and that he had thus chosen to let the manner drop.¹⁵⁷⁹

FREDERICK THE GREAT (1858-1865)

While Carlyle might have largely held his peace regarding current imperial affairs, in *Frederick the Great* he once again set out his ideal of what an empire ought to be. Neglected by previous commentators, the following passages of *Frederick* are important, insofar as they demonstrate the persistence of a progressive, civilising narrative in Carlyle's works, even after the publication of the 'Occasional Discourse'. Moreover, they also suggest that Carlyle was not necessarily singling out West Indian blacks, but rather arguing that all peoples, including the English, had needed to be drilled into habits of industry. For instance, in the first volume of *Frederick*, 'Albert the Bear', having subdued the 'anarchic Wends' to the east of Brandenburg, proceeded to introduce 'large numbers of Dutch Netherlanders into those countries; men thrown out of work, who already knew how to deal with bog and sand by mixing and delving, and who first taught Brandenburg what greenness and cow-pasture was'. The Wends, 'in presence of such things', found themselves presented with a choice, 'either to become German, and grow milk and cheese in the Dutch manner, or to disappear from the world'.¹⁵⁸⁰ In this sense, though Albert did of course use force against the Wends, this was, according to Carlyle, only as a means to establishing the stability and order necessary to the progress of peaceful industry, which was in turn of benefit to the Wends themselves

¹⁵⁷⁷TC to John Strachey, 13th Sep. 1857, *CL* 33:81.

¹⁵⁷⁸Varouxakis, *Liberty Abroad*, 115-116.

¹⁵⁷⁹TC to Henry Parkes, 31st Dec. 1861, *CL* 38:31. However, Carlyle still occasionally returned to the subject. For instance, in 1868, Carlyle wrote to Charles Gavan Duffy, who had emigrated to Australia, becoming Commissioner for Public Works in Victoria, expressing his wish that Australia and 'Mother-Country could contrive some way to have ten times as much emigration' (TC to Duffy, 1st Mar. 1868, and 12th Dec 1871, in Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle*, 233-236, 243-244).

¹⁵⁸⁰*Frederick the Great*, I:66-67.

(provided they elected to comply). As Carlyle put it, 'conquest' thus ultimately issued in 'ploughshare instead of sword'.¹⁵⁸¹

For Carlyle, another exemplar of imperialism was provided by Friedrich Wilhelm's colonisation of Prussian Lithuania. As noted in the previous chapter, Carlyle had been at pains to emphasise that Friedrich Wilhelm 'was essentially an Industrial man; great in organizing, regulating, in constraining chaotic heaps to become cosmic for him'.¹⁵⁸² Following a 'pestilence' in Lithuania, the towns of the region were almost 'entirely depopulated', and 'hundreds of thousands of fertile acres fell to waste'. In response, Friedrich Wilhelm invited 'Colonists to come, and, on favourable terms, till and reap there'.¹⁵⁸³ While this system of state-sponsored emigration 'cost Friedrich Wilhelm enormous sums', these were 'amply repaid, even in his own time'. For Carlyle, this provided a sobering corrective to the recent failures of the British in the Crimea: 'Fancy 150,000 pounds invested there, in the Bank of Nature herself; and a hundred millions invested, say at Balaclava, in the Bank of Newspaper rumour: and the respective rates of interest they will yield, a million years hence!'.¹⁵⁸⁴ Indeed, passing through Lithuania later in his reign, Friedrich Wilhelm was able to delight in the spectacle of 'busy men, with their industries, their steady pious husbandries, making all things green and fruitful'.¹⁵⁸⁵ As the reviewer of the *Times* indignantly pointed out, 'Mr. Carlyle gratuitously contrasts this with our own outlay at Balaclava'.¹⁵⁸⁶ For Carlyle, then, not all imperialisms were equal. That of Friedrich Wilhelm was justified, since it served to further the cause of peaceful work, progress, and civilisation. In contrast, the recent adventures of the British served only to further the cause of war, death, and destruction.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Frederick accomplished similar feats in Silesia, and later Poland. According to Carlyle, upon acquiring the former in 1742, Frederick immediately had it 'wrought in all respects, financial, administrative, judicial, secular and spiritual, into the Prussian model'. Silesia was, in this state, worth 'six or eight times' more to Prussia than it had been to Austria, and even more so to 'the Inhabitants' themselves. For this reason, since then 'no part of the Prussian Dominion' had ever been 'more loyal to the Hohenzollerns' than Silesia.¹⁵⁸⁷ Thus, Carlyle believed that, in order to be legitimate, imperialism had to bring some benefit to subject peoples.

¹⁵⁸¹*Frederick the Great*, I:83.

¹⁵⁸²*Frederick the Great*, I:249-250. See also I:263. Carlyle had already made the same point about the early Markgraves (I:96).

¹⁵⁸³*Frederick the Great*, III:91.

¹⁵⁸⁴*Frederick the Great*, III:98-99.

¹⁵⁸⁵*Frederick the Great*, III:271.

¹⁵⁸⁶'Carlyle's Frederick the Great', in *The Times* (26th Oct. 1858), 10

¹⁵⁸⁷*Frederick the Great*, V:146-147.

Moreover, he believed that if it did bring benefit, then it would eventually win the loyalty and the confidence of the latter.

A final example of Carlyle's imperial vision is provided by Frederick's conduct in Poland, somewhat later in his reign. The King of Poland having died, there ensued, according to Carlyle '*huge Anarchies in that Country*'.¹⁵⁸⁸ Understanding that the Poles were unable to extricate themselves from this chaos, Frederick promptly invaded:

Readers ask rather: "And had Friedrich no feeling about Poland itself, then, and this atrocious Partitioning of the poor Country?" Apparently none whatever; - unless it might be, that Deliverance from Anarchy, Pestilence, Famine, and Pigs eating your dead bodies, would be a manifest advantage for Poland.¹⁵⁸⁹

Citing from a certain Herr Dr. Freytag, Carlyle then described how Frederick proceeded to 'carry Law, Culture, Liberty and Industry into the East of Europe'. Finding 'heaps and ruins', he sent in 'a company of 187 Schoolmasters' and 'multitudes of German Mechanics too, from brick-makers up to machine-builders'. Soon, according to Carlyle:

Everywhere there began a digging, a hammering, a building; Cities were peopled anew; street after street rose out of the heaps of ruins; new Villages of Colonists were laid out, new modes of agriculture ordered. In the first Year after taking possession, the great Canal (of Bromberg) was dug... The vast breadths of land, gained from the state of swamp by drainage into this Canal, were immediately peopled by German Colonists.¹⁵⁹⁰

In this sense, *Frederick* was less a celebration of war and conquest than of the order, stability, and peaceful industry that at times followed from the latter.¹⁵⁹¹ Similar ideas were reflected in a letter that Carlyle wrote to the *Times* on 28th November 1876. Here, he praised Russia as 'a good and even noble element in Europe', contending that the Russians performed 'a signal service to God and man in drilling into order and peace anarchic populations all over their side of the world'.¹⁵⁹² Thus, it seems, Carlyle was not a proponent of a narrow, exclusive British nationalism, but rather

¹⁵⁸⁸*Frederick the Great*, IX:285 et seq.

¹⁵⁸⁹*Frederick the Great*, X:31.

¹⁵⁹⁰*Frederick the Great*, X:39-42.

¹⁵⁹¹For an account of Frederick reclaiming land and establishing colonies alongside former soldiers, see the 'Appendix: A Day with Friedrich', X:195-214.

¹⁵⁹²Cited in Heffer, *Moral Desperado*, 379.

sympathised with all forms of imperial rule that brought benefit to the subject people concerned, particularly by organising them for peaceful labour.

While *Frederick* of course dealt primarily with Prussia, it did contain some passing references to Britain. As noted in earlier sections, the young Carlyle had drawn upon the 'four stages' theory of the Scottish Enlightenment, according to which all peoples passed through the same stages of 'savagery', 'barbarism', 'agriculture', and 'commerce'. Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle came to believe that the progress of commerce needed to be organised, and thus embraced a more authoritarian understanding of progress and civilisation. However, he remained, at least at times, a universalist. For instance, in 'Chartism' (1839), Carlyle had made clear that the English too had undergone this process, praising 'strong Norman Nobles' for drilling the 'wild Teutonic people' of England 'into unity and peaceable co-operation'. Twenty years later, some time after the publication of the 'Occasional Discourse', Carlyle again repeated this point in *Frederick*, writing:

no Nation that has not first been governed by so-called "Tyrants," and held tight to the curb till it became perfect in its paces, and thoroughly amenable to rule and law, and heartily respectful of the same, and totally abhorrent of the want of the same, ever came to much in this world. England itself, in foolish quarters of England, still howls and execrates lamentably over its William Conqueror, and rigorous line of Normans and Plantagenets; but without them, if you will consider well, what had it ever been? A gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles, capable of no grand combinations, lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity; not dreaming of heroic toil, and silence, and endurance, such as leads to the high places of this Universe.¹⁵⁹³

The imagery of a 'gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles', 'lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity', is not altogether dissimilar to that applied to blacks in the 'Occasional Discourse'. In any case, Carlyle adopted broadly the same authoritarian understanding of progress in relation to the English, the Irish, the Chactaws, the blacks of the West Indies, the Wends, the Lithuanians, the Silesians, the

1593 *Frederick the Great*, I:293-295. Compare Froude, *The English in the West Indies* [1888] (New York, 1890), 124-125: "The gulf which divides the colours is no arbitrary prejudice but has been opened by the centuries of training and discipline which have given us the start in the race... The African blacks have been free enough for thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of years, and it has been the absence of restraint which has prevented them from becoming civilized. Generation after generation, and the children are as like their fathers as the successive generations of apes. The whites, it is likely enough, succeeded one another with the same similarity... Our own Anglo-Norman race has become capable of self-government only after a thousand years of civil and spiritual authority". Cited in Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, 198-200.

Poles, and the peoples of the Russian steppe. Certain 'racist' outbursts notwithstanding, it is thus important to recognise the persistence of universal, progressive, and civilisational notions in Carlyle's later writings. Indeed, in this sense, Carlyle shows the truth of Pocock's observation that 'the concepts Europeans have used to relegate and repress others are at the same time those they have used to understand and even criticise themselves'.¹⁵⁹⁴

There is one final noteworthy reference to Britain and its role in the world in *Frederick the Great*. As noted above, Carlyle had already expressed disapproval of the Spanish *conquistadores*, particularly their ruthless exploitation of slave labourers in the gold mines of America. In *Frederick*, Carlyle again returned to the subject, particularly in his discussion of the so-called 'War of Jenkins' Ear', which took place between Britain and Spain from 1739 to 1748. As David Armitage has pointed out, it was during these years that the British came to define themselves and their empire 'as Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free'.¹⁵⁹⁵ Having immersed himself in sources from this era, Carlyle seems to have assimilated many of these ideas. In particular, he contrasted the British empire, which consisted in production and trade, with the Spanish, which consisted primarily in plunder. Despite its own inability to trade effectively with its dominions in the Americas, Spain had sought to exclude British merchants from the latter, or, as Carlyle put it, to 'keep Half the World locked up in embargo'. According to Carlyle, the question posed in the 'War of Jenkins' Ear' was thus:

Colonial-Empire, whose is it to be? Shall Half the World be England's, for industrial purposes; which is innocent, laudable, conformable to the Multiplication-table at least, and other plain Laws? Or shall it be Spain's for arrogant-torpid sham-devotional purposes, contradictory to every Law?¹⁵⁹⁶

Britain's cause was that of peaceful industry, and the war was thus, according to Carlyle, '*A just War*'.¹⁵⁹⁷ Emerging victorious, Britain gained the right to trade with the Spanish Americas under favourable conditions, and began to emerge as a major commercial power on a world scale. In this sense, while the vast majority of wars were 'mere futile transitory dust-whirlwinds stilled in blood', 'extensive fits of human insanity', the 'War of Jenkins' Ear' was an exception, having had 'something

¹⁵⁹⁴Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. IV, 'Barbarians, Savages and Empires', 165.

¹⁵⁹⁵Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 173-174. Armitage also notes that 'the conception of the British Empire as Protestant, commercial, maritime and free lingered, vestigially but reassuringly', throughout the nineteenth century' (198).

¹⁵⁹⁶*Frederick the Great*, IV:275-277. See also V:6-8, VI:300, and IX:240.

¹⁵⁹⁷*Frederick the Great*, IV:87-88.

of World-History' in it.¹⁵⁹⁸ In sum, Carlyle's debts to eighteenth-century notions of the beneficent force of commerce were still discernible, even at this late stage.

MILL'S LATER IMPERIAL THOUGHT: A COMPARISON WITH CARLYLE (1859-1861)

During the time that Carlyle was busying himself with *Frederick*, Mill published his *On Liberty* (1859) and *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861). In previous sections, it has been argued that a narrow focus on Carlyle and Mill's 'Negro Question' debate has served to obscure wider affinities in their imperial thought, particularly regarding progress, civilisation, and authority. In these later works, Mill once again put forward a theory of progressive imperialism highly similar to that of Carlyle. In *On Liberty*, Mill argued that 'Despotism' was 'a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end'. However, as Mill made clear, such 'compulsion' was only a temporary expedient, only 'admissible' until 'mankind' had 'attained the capacity of being guided to their own improvement by conviction or persuasion'.¹⁵⁹⁹ In the *Considerations*, Mill reiterated the arguments that he had already made in the *Principles of Political Economy*, while also making an explicit reference to Saint-Simonism. He wrote:

uncivilized races... are averse to continuous labour of an unexciting kind. Yet all real civilization is at this price... There needs a rare concurrence of circumstances, and for that reason often a vast length of time, to reconcile such a people to industry, unless they are for a while compelled to it. Hence even personal slavery, by giving a commencement to industrial life... may accelerate the transition to a better freedom than that of fighting and rapine... the sort of government fittest for them... [would be] a parental despotism or aristocracy, resembling the St. Simonian form of socialism... This, which may be termed the government of leading-strings, seems to be the one required to carry such a people the most rapidly through the next necessary step in social progress.¹⁶⁰⁰

For Mill, the problem was thus how best to 'organize this rule, so as to make it a good instead of an evil to the subject people'.¹⁶⁰¹ Was this really that different to what Carlyle was writing? At the very least, it would seem to suggest that the differences between the two men have been vastly

¹⁵⁹⁸*Frederick the Great*, IV: 241-242.

¹⁵⁹⁹'On Liberty', [1859] in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, Oxford World's Classics Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 14-15.

¹⁶⁰⁰'Considerations on Representative Government', in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, 232-234.

¹⁶⁰¹'Considerations on Representative Government', 454. Mill made similar remarks regarding Ireland (433-434).

exaggerated. Both Carlyle and Mill supported authoritarian imperial rule, on the condition it served as a means to progress, civilisation, improvement, and, particularly, to the development of 'industrial life'.

CONCLUSION

As Gregory Claeys has recently demonstrated, Auguste Comte and his British followers used the concept of *industrie* to articulate a critique of empire, arguing that those engaged in peaceful work had no interest in atavistic militarism.¹⁶⁰² However, as this chapter has shown, via the Saint-Simonians and Carlyle, the same concept could also provide a powerful rationale for imperialism. The young Carlyle, already being familiar with Scottish Enlightenment notions of stadial progress, commerce, and civilisation, had no great difficulty in embracing the Saint-Simonian vision of industrialism on a global scale. Following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle no longer placed his faith in the spontaneous growth of commerce, but rather came to believe that the onward march of industry needed to be organised, not only at home, but also abroad. This conviction introduced a strong authoritarian tendency into Carlyle's imperial thought, which was, undeniably, at times exacerbated by his recourse to aggressive racial stereotyping. However, we should not allow the latter to overshadow Carlyle's enduring universalism, particularly his belief that all peoples, at some point or other in their histories, needed to be drilled into habits of industry and order. Reproducing one of the tensions that characterised his domestic thought, Carlyle left some doubt as to whether this authoritarian 'organisation of labour' would be a permanent state of affairs, or rather a temporary expedient designed to prepare the people in question for eventual emancipation. However, he never altogether closed off this latter possibility. And, at the very least, Carlyle made abundantly clear that in order to be legitimate, imperial rule could not consist in the wholesale plunder and enslavement of colonised peoples (as on the Spanish model), but must rather bring some kind of benefit to them (here, he had much in common with Mill). Thus Carlyle's imperial thought provides a good illustration of John Burrow's observation that 'the reverse side of nineteenth-century arrogance' was 'a genuine humanitarianism and passion for improvement'.¹⁶⁰³ Finally, we should not forget the other aspects of Carlyle's imperial thought, such as his advocacy of organised emigration, and a federal system of parliaments. Indeed, these ideas arguably laid the basis for later nineteenth-century concepts of a 'Greater Britain'.¹⁶⁰⁴

1602See Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire 1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), ch. 1. Comte was the former secretary of Saint-Simon, and appropriated many of his ideas.

1603J. W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 50-53. Burrow was referring to James Mill (the father of J. S.), and particularly his writings on India.

1604Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*.

Carlyle's 'industrialist' justification of empire seems to have enjoyed a long posterity. For instance, in a speech delivered in 1869, John Ruskin took up Carlyle's ideas regarding emigration, cooperation, federation, and empire, arguing:

We may organize emigration into an infinite power. We may assemble troops of the more adventurous and ambitious of our youth; we may send them on truest foreign service, founding new seats of authority, and centres of thought, in uncultivated and unconquered lands; retaining the full affection to the native country no less in our colonists than in our armies, teaching them to maintain allegiance to their fatherland in labour no less than in battle; aiding them with free hand in the prosecution of discovery, and the victory over adverse natural powers; establishing seats of every manufacture in the climates and places best fitted for it, and bringing ourselves into due alliance and harmony of skill with the dexterities of every race, and the wisdoms of every tradition and every tongue.¹⁶⁰⁵

In 1886, J. A. Froude published his *Oceana, or England and Her Colonies*, a work in which, to use Duncan Bell's phrase, he set out his vision of a 'patriotic imperial citizenry'.¹⁶⁰⁶ Froude invoked Carlyle in support of his proposals, writing:

According to [Carlyle] England's business, if she understood it, was to gather her colonies close to her, and spread her people where they could breathe again... It was another England that Carlyle looked forward to... no longer a small island, but an ocean empire, where her millions and tens of millions would be spread over their broad inheritance, each leading wholesome and happy lives on their own fields, and by their own firesides, hardened into men by the sun of Australia or the frosts of Canada.¹⁶⁰⁷

The same year, Carlyle's friend Henry Larkin wrote, possibly with reference to Froude: 'We hear much talk in these days of what is called our Colonial Empire, - that wider, if not yet greater Britain, upon which the sun never sets'. According to Larkin, once 'wisely organised', this 'greater Britain' might one day become 'the mighty empire of industry and cooperative beneficence'

1605 'The Future of England' [14th Dec 1869], in *The Crown of Wild Olive – Munera Pulveris – Pre-Raphaelitism – Aratra Pentelici* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1894), 431.

1606 Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 9, 145-149. As Bell points out, the title *Oceana* was a conscious reference to a work of the same name by James Harrington, a famous republican writer of the seventeenth-century

1607 J. A. Froude, *Oceana or England and Her Colonies* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1886), 153.

envisaged by Carlyle.¹⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, Larkin also sought to defend the more controversial aspects of Carlyle's imperial thought. According to Larkin, Carlyle did not believe in 'cutting recklessly asunder the fixed and recognised relation of master and servant, and leaving the poor Negro in his darkness and folly to guide and shift for himself'. Rather, he never ceased 'sternly insisting on a just relation between them, - a relation of mutual benefit; and, for the Negro, a relation which would make clearly possible for him the highest level of humanity his own self-conquest might gradually qualify him to attain'.¹⁶⁰⁹ Moreover, Carlyle's ideas regarding empire seem highly similar to those of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century socialists, who, as one recent historian puts it, sought to 'promote a socialist brand of imperialism, broadly conceived in terms of a co-operative commonwealth ideal'.¹⁶¹⁰ It is to these socialists we now turn, in a short epilogue dealing with Carlyle's influence on the early Labour movement.

¹⁶⁰⁸Henry Larkin, *Carlyle and the Open Secret of His Life* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1886), 275. See also 258-260.

¹⁶⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 259-260.

¹⁶¹⁰Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics*, ch. 2, quote on p. 125-126.

Epilogue

Thomas Carlyle and the Labour Movement, 1880-1935

INTRODUCTION

In an article published in 1856, James Martineau claimed that Carlyle's influence had been 'primarily exerted' upon 'academics, artists, littérateurs, “strong-minded” women, “debating” youths, Scotchmen of the phrenological grade, and Irishmen of the Young-Ireland school'.¹⁶¹¹ Indeed, there was much truth to Martineau's claim. However, at the same time, it captured only one side of the story. As we have seen in previous chapters, Carlyle's works had also begun to exert a considerable influence upon Chartists, Owenites, and Co-operators. The enthusiasm of the latter for Carlyle's writings might be gauged from a review of the *Life of Sterling*, which appeared in the *Friend of the People*, a newspaper edited by the Chartist leader George Julian Harney, in 1852. Here, the reviewer lamented the fact that 'a man of the fearless mind of Mr. Carlyle, should *himself* be so tied and *wedded* to conventionalism as not to publish editions of his writings at a cheaper rate'. He then added: 'Let us hope, then, ere long, to see a “People's edition” of Mr. Carlyle's works'.¹⁶¹² Similarly, the following year, in 1853, a speaker at the Owenite Hall of Science in London 'expressed a desire, that the public might soon be favoured with a cheap edition of Mr. Carlyle's writings, as it is now a matter of fact that great numbers who would wish to read them are precluded from doing so by the very high price at which they are published'.¹⁶¹³ Carlyle's publisher, Chapman & Hall, seems to have recognised and responded to this demand, so that, by 1857, the *Leader* was able to report:

For many years thirsty souls with thirsty purses have been clamouring for a cheap edition of the most remarkable writer of our day; and at length Messrs Chapman and Hall have answered these demands by the commencement of an edition in monthly volumes at six shillings each.

¹⁶¹¹James Martineau, 'Personal Influences on Our Present Theology' [*National Review*, Oct. 1856], reprinted in his *Essays: Theological and Moral* (Boston MA: William V. Spencer, 1866), 393.

¹⁶¹²Review of J. C. Hare, 'Sterling's Essays and Tales, with a Memoir of His Life', and T. Carlyle, 'Life of John Sterling' (1), in *The Friend of the People*, ed. G. Julian Harney, no. 2 (14th Feb. 1852), 14-15

¹⁶¹³'London Secular Society', in *The Reasoner and Secular Gazette*, vol. XV, no. 16 (19th Oct. 1853), 253. The title of the lecture was 'The Writings of Thomas Carlyle', which suggests that those unable to afford Carlyle's books gained access to his ideas by other means.

However, the author then added: 'Even this reduction in price will not reach the mass of readers for such works'.¹⁶¹⁴ Thus, it was not until considerably later in the nineteenth century that Carlyle's writings became readily available to a large working-class audience.¹⁶¹⁵ By 1889, the popular science writer Samuel Laing could declare:

Shilling and even sixpenny editions of Shakespeare, Scott, Carlyle, and other standard authors, are continually brought out, and must be sold in tens of thousands to make them a paying speculation. Who buys them? Certainly not the upper classes, who, in former days, were the only buyers of books. They must circulate widely among the masses, and especially among the more thoughtful members of the working-classes, and the rising generation of all classes who are earnestly seeking to improve their minds and widen their range of sympathies and culture.¹⁶¹⁶

'Nothing', Laing wrote, 'gives me more hope for the future', than the fact that the works of authors such as 'Carlyle, and Ruskin, are published in ever increasing numbers and at ever lower prices'.¹⁶¹⁷

Indeed, Laing's conjectures regarding the probable readership of cheap editions of Carlyle are borne out by the memoirs and recollections of numerous working-class autodidacts.¹⁶¹⁸ By way of illustration, we might cite the example of Keir Hardie, who would later go on to become the first independent Labour Member of Parliament. Hardie began work as a message boy at the age of seven, learning to read and write with the help of his parents during evenings. At the age of sixteen, he read Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, going 'through the book three times in succession until the spirit of it somewhat entered into me'. As Hardie later recalled, this moment constituted 'a real turning point' in his life.¹⁶¹⁹ Another example was Fred Jowett, who would also become a Labour MP.

¹⁶¹⁴'New Edition of Carlyle', in *The Leader* (31st Jan. 1857), 112. For a similar observation, see 'Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great. Second Notice', in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 26 (1859), 41-45 (41).

¹⁶¹⁵In addition to the increased availability of Carlyle's works, the so-called 'Great Depression' (1873-1896) would have created an environment in which Carlyle's ideas could again be taken seriously. For instance, in 1881, we find Andrew Lang praising Carlyle for having provided: 'a check to the washy optimism of thirty years ago. That was the time when war was abolished... when education was to make all the world moral, when commerce was to render it comfortable exceedingly, when Free Trade and political economy, and the sweet influences of the suffrage were received as literally a kind of gospel. The thirty years have passed, the millennium is no nearer, war is not extinct, and the time is strewn with the wrecks of opinions exploded and renounced' (Andrew Lang, 'Mr. Carlyle's *Reminiscences*', in *Fraser's Magazine*, XXIII [Apr. 1881], 522).

¹⁶¹⁶Samuel Laing, *Problems of the Future, and Essays* [1889], new ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1893), 221.

¹⁶¹⁷Laing, *Problems of the Future*, 307.

¹⁶¹⁸Jonathan Rose has noted that Carlyle 'had a huge following among autodidacts'. See his *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven CT : Yale University Press, 2001), 39-41.

¹⁶¹⁹As cited in W. T. Stead, 'The Labour Party and the Books that helped to make it', in *Review of Reviews*, 33 (June 1906), 570, 575-576, 578-579

Having begun work in a textile-mill at the age of eight, Jowett first read Carlyle at the age of fourteen. This encounter, he later wrote, 'made a deep impression on my young mind'.¹⁶²⁰ Indeed, as Jowett remarked elsewhere, the book that led him 'to think and reflect was "Past and Present"'.¹⁶²¹ Following these early readings, Jowett joined the Bradford Branch of the Socialist League, which as Brockway puts it, 'appears to have been a cross-section of the thinking working-class of that time'. The secretary of the branch was Fred Pickles, who would later go on to serve Keir Hardie in the same capacity. According to Brockway, Pickles 'so loved Carlyle and Ruskin that he printed quotations from them on the leaflets announcing meetings'. As Jowett later recalled, such men 'were really the earliest Bradfordian advocates of modern Socialism'.¹⁶²² Another notable instance of such enthusiasm for Carlyle was James Thompson Bain. Born in Dundee in 1860, Bain had begun work in a factory at the age of seven. Having served in the army in South Africa and India, he returned to Scotland in the mid-1880s, training as a fitter, and joining both the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and the Scottish Land and Labour League. Moreover, as Bain's biographer Jonathan Hyslop puts it, it was around this time that Bain 'developed a particular fascination with the writings of Thomas Carlyle'.¹⁶²³ Bain later recalled his first encounter with Carlyle in the following terms:

I remember it as distinctly today as on the day when I satisfied my then craving in a small way by parting with my only sixpence in return for a cheap copy of Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus' and how I hugged it under my coat until I got to my lodgings, and then gave myself up to the reading of it... It but whetted by appetite, nor did I rest satisfied until I had bought with my scanty savings the whole of Carlyle's works.¹⁶²⁴

'True', Bain added, 'Carlyle was not a Socialist himself, but he has made more Socialists than many of our own Socialist writers'.¹⁶²⁵ Another noteworthy example was Ben Tillett, who would later

¹⁶²⁰Jowett cited in Fenner Brockway, *Socialism Over Sixty Years: The Life of Jowett of Bradford (1864-1944)* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1946), 28.

¹⁶²¹As cited in Stead, 'The Labour Party and the Books that helped to make it', 570, 575-576, 578-579.

¹⁶²²Brockway, *Socialism Over Sixty Years*, 29-30. The citation from Jowett is taken from *Bradford I.L.P. News*, 19th Feb. 1937.

¹⁶²³Jonathan Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist: J.T. Bain, A Scottish Rebel in Colonial South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2004), 13-15, 53, 65.

¹⁶²⁴Bain in the *Worker* (Nov./Dec. 1913), as cited in Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist*, 57. A similar anecdote was recounted by V. W. Garratt, a Birmingham machine-worker: 'By the time I was seventeen, my passion for reading had become so intense that a few hours during the evening seemed totally insufficient for what I wanted to do... At one end of the shop stood the foreman's little glass office, from which he could observe all that was going on through the windows in front of him. To obstruct his view was my only chance of reading, so I formed a screen by putting boxes of fittings (ostensibly for use) on the vital part of the bench, fixed a small mirror in line with the door of his office, and then stealthily drew from my pocket Everyman's *Sartor Resartus*, which I stood against the barricade and alternated spasms of sumptuous reading with arid efforts at soldering or riveting'. V. W. Garratt, *A Man in the Street* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1939), 96-97.

¹⁶²⁵Bain in the *Worker* (Nov./Dec. 1913), as cited in Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist*, 61.

become a leading trade unionist and Labour MP. Having begun work in a brick-yard at the age of eight, Tillett later joined the Royal Navy. Returning to London after a long spell at sea, he 'discovered Thomas Carlyle, and was held spellbound by the dark fury of his spirit, and the strange contortions of his style'.¹⁶²⁶ Finally, as already noted in the introduction to this book, in 1906, the *Review of Reviews* asked the first large cohort of Labour MPs to name the books and authors that had influenced them the most. Carlyle came fourth, ceding only to Ruskin, Dickens, and the Bible.¹⁶²⁷ In his response, James O'Grady (Leeds, East) wrote that 'above and beyond all Carlyle is my solace and inspiration', while James Parker (Halifax) stated:

Perhaps I owe more to Thomas Carlyle than to any other writer... "Sartor Resartus" is, I think, the book I would save from my library if my house was on fire and I could only escape with one book.

For his part, John Johnson (Gateshead) attached particular importance to "Heroes and Hero Worship," "Sartor Resartus," and the "Latter-Day Pamphlets", while John T. Macpherson (Preston) wrote that the books 'I love the most and have received the greatest instruction from are Ruskin's works, particularly "Unto This Last", Thomas Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship", and his "French Revolution"'.¹⁶²⁸ In sum, there can be no shadow of a doubt concerning Carlyle's profound influence upon the early Labour movement. As one contributor to the Marxist magazine *Justice* remarked two years later, in 1908:

Anyone with a personal knowledge of the inside of the Labour movement knows how Marx is looked upon with contempt as a dry, scholarly, musty German: the inspiration of Labourism is seemingly based on Ruskin, Carlyle, and Kingsley, a poor basis for a proletarian party.¹⁶²⁹

Surprisingly, this subject has received very little consideration in the extant secondary literature. While the fact that Labour MPs were 'influenced' by Carlyle has been noted, no serious attempt has been made to grasp the precise nature of this 'influence'. For instance, Jonathan Mendilow's article 'Carlyle, Marx & the ILP' (1984) consists largely of a comparison of Carlyle and Marx, plus a few

¹⁶²⁶Ben Tillett, *Memories and Reflections* (London: John Long, 1931), 77

¹⁶²⁷Stead, 'The Labour Party and the Books that helped to make it', 570, 575-576, 578-579.

¹⁶²⁸Ibid.

¹⁶²⁹John A. Dawson, 'An Open Letter to Max Beer', in *Justice* (12th Dec. 1908), 8. *Justice* was the organ of the Social Democratic Federation.

stray quotations from Keir Hardie.¹⁶³⁰ Similarly, Carlyle is almost entirely absent from Mark Bevir's recent book on *The Making of British Socialism* (2011).¹⁶³¹ In what remains of this epilogue, an attempt will be made to close this lacuna in the secondary literature. Particularly, it will be argued that Carlyle's influence consisted in a definite set of political doctrines, namely, those Saint-Simonian ones that have been explored in the previous chapters of this book. The further purport of all this is that Bevir is mistaken in suggesting that 'British Socialism' was 'made' during the 1880s; in fact, much of the theoretical groundwork had already been laid by Carlyle during the 1830s and 1840s.

'INDUSTRIALISM' AND THE 'GOSPEL OF WORK'

As has been argued in a precious chapter, the young Carlyle had been vitally interested in the writings of the Greek and Roman Stoics, and in classical notions of virtue more generally. In brief, he came to believe that the key to the good life was to gain mastery over one's passions, and to conform voluntarily to the laws of nature. This was to live rationally, and to live virtuously. It was also to be 'free', in the sense of freedom from one's own selfish passions. In the Saint-Simonian concept of *industrie*, Carlyle found a means to re-situate these classical virtues in the world of work. In other words, for Carlyle, labour was now the most effective means to self-mastery and conformity to the laws of nature. In this sense, the man who worked was 'free', whereas the idler was 'slavish'. Moreover, following his encounter with the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle increasingly moved the notion of the common good to the fore, arguing that work might be understood as a 'noble suffering for others'. In sum, Carlyle developed what, in the earlier chapter, has been termed a 'stoical industrialism'. Moreover, as was also noted, Carlyle's writings provided an important resource to contemporary 'secularists', such as George Jacob Holyoake, who were engaged in an attempt to articulate a non-Christian ethics, rooted in notions of duty, solidarity, and work.

An early twentieth-century echo of Carlylean industrialism is to be found in the memoirs of William Edwin Adams, long-standing editor of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, Co-operator, and prominent advocate of 'Lib-Labism' (the making of electoral pacts between the Liberal and Labour parties). In his autobiography, entitled *Memoirs of a Social Atom* (1903), Adams dwelt at some length upon his grandmother's employment as a washerwoman, before explaining:

1630Jonathan Mendilow, 'Carlyle, Marx & the ILP: Alternative Routes to Socialism', in *Polity*, 17:2 (1984), 225-247.

1631Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011).

Let us understand each other. Work of any sort is honourable. It is idleness, and especially that form of idleness which is called loafing, that is disgraceful... "Work is worship." Honesty in work as in all things else. The same doctrine is taught by Emerson, Carlyle, Ruskin, and every great thinker who has expatiated on the subject... Well, the humble and industrious women who laboured amidst suds and steam carried into practice the precepts of the philosophers.¹⁶³²

Thus, like Carlyle, Adams considered work to be the condition of all dignity and self-respect. Much later in the book, Adams inveighed against 'the false and wrong-headed conception that all labour is degrading.' The 'fundamental error of the workman', he wrote, lay 'in disparaging his own calling'. Warming to his theme, Adams then argued that such 'disparagement' ought to be left 'to snobs and idlers and loafers - to those slugs and scums of the earth who have never done an honest day's toil in their lives'. He then cited, at some length, from Carlyle's *Past and Present*:

The older and infinitely better conception was comprised in the desire to elevate labour, and so elevate the labourer. "Work is worship."... Every great thinker has acclaimed the old doctrine - none more powerfully than Thomas Carlyle. "For," says he, "there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in idleness alone is there perpetual despair." Again, "Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessing."

Moreover, like Carlyle, Adams valued work not only as the foundation of individual self-respect, but also as a social ethos. In particular, work was not a matter of mere wages, but rather a duty towards the community in which one lived. In particular, Adams implied that it was incumbent upon the worker to produce a good-quality product, which would be of use to others. 'But Carlyle', Adams feared, 'has preached in vain; for a canker is eating into the very soul of the worker':

a "policy of skulk," a policy of demanding a good day's wage and doing in return for it a bad day's work.... Bad workmanship will be the order of the day. Our ships will be made, not to swim, but to sink; our houses, not to stand, but to fall; our clothes, not to wear, but to wear out. And who will fare worst from the general collapse of things - who but the sailors who go to sea in the rotten ships, the labourers who live in the jerry houses, the poor who buy the

1632W. E. Adams, *Memoirs of a Social Atom* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1903), I:34-35.

shoddy clothes?¹⁶³³

Like Carlyle, Adams thus valued labour for its ennobling effect upon the individual labourer, as well as for the contribution it made to the public good. In other words, as one perceptive French critic put it in 1913, 'the doctrine of Carlyle' was two-fold:

[First,] it constitutes an elevated form of individual morality: happiness can no longer consist in a mere quest for pleasure; it must rather be founded upon effort and “service”.
[Second,] it is an elevated form of social morality: duty consists in justice and solidarity.

This doctrine, the critic added, had become 'a real force in the Anglo-Saxon countries'.¹⁶³⁴

As noted in the earlier chapter, previous commentators have mistakenly interpreted Carlyle's use of the term 'industrialism' as a reference to factories or mass production, in the sense of the late nineteenth-century notion of an 'Industrial Revolution'. However, as has been argued, this is anachronistic. By 'industrialism', Carlyle meant rather all forms of useful, creative labour, in the broadest possible sense. Indeed, many of Carlyle's twentieth-century disciples recognised this quite clearly. As has already been seen, W. E. Adams believed that his washerwoman grandmother had been a living example of the 'Gospel of Work'. Another instance is provided by Arthur Lynch, Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Clare West, who would later go on to stand as a Labour candidate in Battersea in 1918. During a debate in the House of Commons in 1910, Lynch declared:

All these millions spent on naval construction! on elementary education! and we find set down for Scottish Art £1,000 and for Irish Art £1,000... I am reminded of the passage in Carlyle, in his wonderful "Sartor Resartus," where he begins:— “A second man I honour, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavouring towards inward harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low?”¹⁶³⁵

Moreover, Carlyle's claim that 'all work is noble' proved open to all manner of appropriation. In

¹⁶³³Ibid., II:548-553.

¹⁶³⁴C. Cestre, 'La doctrine sociale de Carlyle', in *La Revue du mois*, 16 (1913), 553-579 (578)

¹⁶³⁵'Board of Education', House of Commons debate, 13th July 1910, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 19, cc. 469-514469.

1930, Margaret Bondfield, Labour MP for Wallsend, sought to defend the honour of Britain's domestic labourers before the House of Commons. In response to some other MPs, who had lamented the fact that the decline of the cotton industry had forced many of its female employees into domestic service, Bondfield stated:

It was not so long ago that Carlyle wrote: "All work is noble; even cotton-spinning is noble." When he said that, it was a most degraded trade. To-day it is a highly respectable trade, and I believe I shall live to see the day when domestic service will be looked upon as a highly respectable occupation.¹⁶³⁶

In sum, 'industrialism' meant not only the factory and the proletariat, but also art and intellectual activity, as well as what we might today call the 'service sector'.

HISTORY

As noted above, Carlyle is almost entirely absent from Mark Bevir's recent work on the *Making of British Socialism* (2011). The exception is a short section pertaining to Henry Myers Hyndman, the aristocratic founder of the Social Democratic Federation. According to Bevir, before becoming a Marxist, the young Hyndman had been influenced by 'Tory Radicalism', that is, by Coleridge, Southey, Disraeli, and Carlyle.¹⁶³⁷ However, one of the central aims of this book has been to debunk the persistent cliché of Carlyle as a 'Tory Radical'. Particularly, it has been argued that Carlyle subscribed to a progressive concept of history, in which 'progress' consisted in an accumulation of useful work. Moreover, he was also hugely indebted to the Saint-Simonian theory of alternating 'organic' and 'critical' eras. To this extent, Carlyle did not wish to preserve or restore the institutions of the middle ages (the most recent 'organic' era), believing these to have been outstripped and rendered obsolete by the rise of industry. Like the Saint-Simonians, he sought rather to draw inspiration from the 'organic' institutions of the past, arguing that their principles might provide some broad guidelines for the 'industrialism' of the future.

¹⁶³⁶'Unemployment Benefit (Women Cotton Operatives)', House of Commons Debate, 6th Nov. 1930, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 244, cc1207-141207.

¹⁶³⁷Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism*, 66-70. Bevir does note that 'certainly there are differences between these thinkers, often profound ones – particularly in the case of Carlyle', but does not develop the point. Similarly, Jonathan Rose deals with Carlyle under the heading 'Conservative Authors and Radical Readers' (Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 39-41).

Indeed, certain readers considered Carlyle to be something quite other than a 'conservative', and cordially appreciated the contempt in which he held traditional institutions. For instance, Helen Crawford, a leading member of the Independent Labour Party, and then, from 1920, the Communist Party of Great Britain, attributed her political awakening to Carlyle, writing in her memoirs:

He stripped naked the Law, the Church and many of the fraudulent shams of his day... [he had a] gift of stripping people of all the vestures designed to overawe the simple – the bombazine gown, the horsehair wig of the judge, the Crown and Sceptre of the Kings and Queens.¹⁶³⁸

In sum, rather than a 'Tory Radical', it makes far more sense to consider Carlyle in the following terms, as penned by the preceptive French critic referred to above in 1913:

[Carlyle] sought in the past examples of solidarity, of social cohesion, and discipline... The lesson taught by the monks of St. Edmundsbury and Abbot Samson, in *Past and Present*, is that of considered and judicious voters, and an impartial elected representative [*élu*], dedicated to the public good. The lesson taught by monastic life, as well as by the organisation of the guilds and the relations of lords with their vassals, is that of a tie binding together the disparate elements of the body politic [*du corps social*]. It is from these precedents that Carlyle draws the notion of solidarity, which he wishes to restore to modern society.¹⁶³⁹

DEMOCRACY, *LAISSEZ-FAIRE*, AND THE 'CONDITION-OF-ENGLAND QUESTION'

As has been argued in a previous chapter, Carlyle had considered the rise of democracy to be inevitable. Like the Saint-Simonians, he believed that democracy was a necessary and indispensable part of a 'critical' era, sweeping aside the rotten, obsolete institutions of the past, and preparing the way for the 'industrialism' of the future. However, he did not believe that democracy constituted an end in itself. In criticising the shortcomings of democracy, moreover, Carlyle drew heavily on Plato. Particularly, he argued that democracy would not in itself suffice to raise the wisest citizens to the helm of the ship of state, or to set the latter on a course conformable to the laws of nature. Furthermore, Carlyle argued, democracy would in itself do nothing to improve the condition of the

¹⁶³⁸Helen Crawford, TS autobiography, Marx Memorial Library, London, cited in Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 44.

¹⁶³⁹C. Cestre, 'La doctrine sociale de Carlyle', in *La Revue du mois*, 16 (1913), 553-579 (565-566)

working-classes, which he dubbed the 'Condition-of-England question'. It perhaps would be surprising to find echoes of this argument among members of the early Labour movement, which remained committed to universal suffrage. However, there is at least one instance, namely, the trade union leader and Labour MP, Ben Tillett. Having cited Carlyle twice in his autobiography, Tillett also wrote:

I did not hold, and never have held, the view that the sole function of the Labour Party is to get men into Parliament. My view, repeatedly stated in conferences of the Party, was that our task was to educate democracy, to enable it to understand its own interest, and to have the courage of its own convictions.¹⁶⁴⁰

Elsewhere in his memoirs, Tillett further claimed that 'democracy loves to be ruled', and that 'democracy has an extraordinary reverence for institutions and traditions'.¹⁶⁴¹

However, Carlyle's arguments regarding *laissez-faire*, and the 'Condition-of-England question', met with a more sympathetic response. As has been seen in the previous chapter, Carlyle believed *laissez-faire*, like democracy, to be a necessary aspect of a 'critical' era. However, he also argued that it had already accomplished its task, and had begun to steadily deteriorate into anarchy. Drawing on Sismondi, as well as the Saint-Simonians, Carlyle placed particular emphasis on competition and mechanisation, which, forcing down the wages of workers, also eroded demand. This in turn served to drive down prices, and thus profits. The result was recurrent crises of over-production (or under-consumption), accompanied by mass unemployment ('pauperism'). Thus, those still in work found themselves dependent upon the fluctuations of market forces, and those out of work on charity and handouts. Importantly, Carlyle objected not so much to poverty in a material sense, as to dependence, and the moral degradation it entailed. Indeed, this was in keeping with the Stoic doctrine that material things were relatively 'indifferent' to the good life, which consisted rather in moral integrity and autonomy.

Again and again, Carlyle's arguments, particularly regarding unemployment, were reiterated by members of the early Labour movement. For instance, in 1893, Keir Hardie delivered his maiden speech in the House of Commons, taking unemployment as his theme. Calling for a programme of 'home colonisation', Hardie claimed that this would

¹⁶⁴⁰Tillett, *Memories and Reflections*, 238. The references to Carlyle are on p. 77 and 111.

¹⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 250.

prevent the fearful demoralisation which being out of work never fails to bring in its train. One of the most harrowing features connected with the problem of unemployment is not the poverty or the hardship they have to endure, but the fearful moral degradation that follows in the train of enforced idleness; and there is no more pitiable spectacle in this world than the man willing to work, who, day after day, vainly begs a brother of the earth, To give him leave to toil.¹⁶⁴²

The following year, Tom Mann, another founding member of the Independent Labour Party, cited Carlyle with regard to unemployment, declaring:

Let Carlyle again be heard: "There is not a horse in England. Able and willing to work, but has due food and lodging; and goes about sleek-coated, satisfied in his heart... The human brain, looking at these sleek English horses, refuses to believe in such impossibility for English men." (*Past and Present*).¹⁶⁴³

Around this time, Mann was living in the East End of London. Here, he at times worked alongside members of the Salvation Army, who were then engaged in practical attempts to address the question of unemployment. Indeed, four years prior to Mann's above statement, that is, in 1890, the leader of the Salvation Army, 'General' William Booth, had published his best-selling *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, in which he cited the same passage from Carlyle. Booth wrote:

Mr. Carlyle long ago remarked that the four-footed worker has already got all that this two-handed one is clamouring for : "There are not many horses in England, able and willing to work, which have not due food and lodging and go about sleek coated, satisfied in heart." You say it is impossible; but, adds Carlyle, "The human brain, looking at these sleek English horses, refuses to believe in such impossibility for English men." Nevertheless, forty years have passed since Carlyle said that, and we seem to be no nearer the attainment of the four-footed standard for the two-handed worker.¹⁶⁴⁴

Several pages later, Booth emphasised the moral degradation that unemployment tended to

1642'Motion for Address. [Adjourned Debate], *House of Commons Debate*, 7th Feb. 1893, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 8, cc691-770.

1643Tom Mann, 'Preachers and Churches', first published in *Vox Clamantium*, ed. A. Reid, Melbourne, 1894, as reprinted in *Tom Mann's Social and Economic Writings*, ed. J. Laurent (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1988), 58-60

1644William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London and New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), 19.

promote, claiming that 'there is hardly any more pathetic figure than that of the strong, able worker', 'seeking for labour as lost treasure and finding it not, until at last, all spirit and vigour worn out in the weary quest, the once willing worker becomes a broken-down drudge, sodden with wretchedness and despairing of all help in this world or in that which is to come'. 'Our organisation of industry', Booth added, 'certainly leaves much to be desired'.¹⁶⁴⁵ In 1923, Thomas Johnston, Labour MP for Stirling and Clackmannan West, spoke in the House of Commons in favour of 'the positive proposals which the Labour party makes for the supersession of the capitalist system by the co-operative commonwealth'. Interestingly, Johnston cited Carlyle, Mill, and Ruskin, in more or less the same breath. He explained:

Markets are speedily glutted and when the markets are glutted the workers are sent out to starve and you continue to have periodically what you call "crises" in which you have the spectacle of people starving in the midst of a superabundance of wealth... The worker to-day regards labour-saving devices as being indeed labour-saving devices, because they mean speedy unemployment for him or his friends. I think it was John Stuart Mill... who said: It is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of a single human being... Thomas Carlyle saw what the capitalist system meant to the working classes when he said: Our successful industry has been hitherto unsuccessful. In the midst of plethoric plenty the people perish. John Ruskin saw too when he said: Our cities are wildernesses of spinning wheels, yet our people have not clothes... That is the system you have to justify—starvation in the midst of plenty, hunger in the midst of a super-abundance—and that is the system that we on these benches challenge.¹⁶⁴⁶

Moreover, such citations from Carlyle became increasingly common during the 'Great Depression' of the 1930s. For instance, in 1930, John McShane, Labour MP for Walsall, made a similar point in the Commons regarding mechanisation, or, as it had already come to be known, 'rationalisation'. According to McShane, the latter had

two consequences. The first may be the cheaper production of goods, but another is the effect on those who are going to be displaced. It may be easy to discuss in general terms the rationalisation of any industry, but it leaves behind it a great trail of ruined homes and broken men and women... What difference is there in the general situation from what there

¹⁶⁴⁵Booth, *In Darkest England*, 32.

¹⁶⁴⁶'Capitalist System', House of Commons Debate, 20th Mar. 1923, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 161, cc2472-5122472.

was when Carlyle wrote his "Tracts for the Times" [sic] ? ... A million shirts are produced, and a million backs are bare. That is as true to-day as if it had been written to-day.¹⁶⁴⁷

The following year, McShane made the same point, again citing Carlyle in support of his argument. He told the House:

when the Geddes Committee reported and deflation actually began, the working men and women were told that if they worked longer hours for lower wages, and produced more, all would be well. They have done it for 12 years and they have produced too much. As Carlyle said in the middle of the last century, "You have produced too much; it is you who are to blame. We have done our best to consume"... Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells them the same as they were told 12 years ago, and they have to tighten their belts further.¹⁶⁴⁸

Three weeks later, the Rev. James Barr, Labour MP for Motherwell, told the House:

Wealth is of little use unless it is available for all. In 1843 Thomas Carlyle wrote his book "Past and Present" in a time of famine and great distress, and he wrote this: England is full of wealth, a multifarious produce, supply for human need in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition. He said that while there was famine, the granaries that lined the quays were all bursting with grain. Then he gave out his great dictum: "In the midst of plethoric plenty the people perish. That is as true to-day as it was then."¹⁶⁴⁹

As has been seen in a previous chapter, Carlyle had challenged the belief that *laissez-faire* meant 'freedom'. Particularly, he argued that for the workers and the poor, *laissez-faire* was more akin to slavery, both to market forces and to the unscrupulous rich. Interestingly, Labour MPs often cited Carlyle in an attempt to refute what has come to be known as the 'negative' concept of liberty.¹⁶⁵⁰ For instance, in 1936, the Rev. James Barr, already mentioned above, spoke in the House of Commons in support of a bill to regulate the betting industry. He declared:

1647'Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill', House of Commons Debate, 3rd Feb. 1930, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 234, cc1589-648.

1648'Beer (Excise Duty and Drawback)', House of Commons Debate, 10th Sep. 1931, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 256, cc313-412.

1649'Finance (No. 2) Bill', House of Commons debate, 2nd Oct. 1931, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 257, cc705-78705.

1650See Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in his *Four Essays on Liberty* (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 118-172.

A third objection to the Bill, which is given in the Amendment, for its rejection, is that— it is an unjustifiable interference with private liberty. I thought that in our politics we had abandoned the idea of *laissez-faire*, and had come to the point when liberty had to be wisely curtailed. At any rate, I say quite bluntly that I am in favour of interfering with the unrestricted liberty of the football pool promoters to exploit the poor. I am, as Thomas Carlyle said, against the liberty to die of starvation.¹⁶⁵¹

Thus, while Carlyle's arguments regarding democracy might not have found much echo in the early Labour movement, his opinions regarding *laissez-faire* and the 'Condition-of-England question' most certainly did.

THE ORGANISATION OF LABOUR

In a previous chapter, it has been argued that Carlyle appropriated the Saint-Simonian concept of a quasi-military 'Organisation of Labour', later fusing it with the Scottish republican Andrew Fletcher's ideas regarding citizen militias. According to Carlyle, the first task of the 'Organisation of Labour' would be the rehabilitation, and, indeed, moral re-generation, of paupers and criminals. However, it would, he argued, gradually extend itself through the whole of society, to such a point that the state would again become identical with the assembled citizenry, the latter gathered not for war or political debate, but for useful work. Furthermore, as the military analogy implies, Carlyle believed that the 'Organisation of Labour' would have to take place on a strictly authoritarian basis. However, with the exception of the criminal classes, by 'authoritarian' he did not necessarily mean 'despotic' or 'tyrannical'. Indeed, given the fact that democracy was already a fact, the country's leaders would in future have to rely primarily on moral force, and would also be subject to a degree of parliamentary restraint. Furthermore, to facilitate participation in this process, Carlyle advocated an ambitious programme of national education, not only to train workers, but to form citizens. Most importantly, Carlyle demonstrated clear affinities with a much older aristocratic republican tradition, insisting that authority was only legitimate if wielded for the good of those subject to it, and of the community as a whole. In sum, Carlyle envisioned an aristocratic, industrialist republic, cohering in a common ethos of work. Moreover, as we have seen, the idea of an authoritarian organisation of labour also found an echo in the writings of John Ruskin.

¹⁶⁵¹'Betting (No. 1) Bill', House of Commons debate, 3rd Apr. 1936, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 310, cc2311-882311.

In the third chapter of his memoirs, Tom Mann reminisced about his 'first socialist activities', between the years of 1884 and 1886. Having joined the Social Democratic Foundation and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, he soon found himself called upon to address public meetings, particularly regarding the problem of 'unemployment'. Mann recalled how he would often adapt passages from Carlyle's writings on the 'Condition of England', noting that these could 'be used with great effect'. Moreover, in proposing solutions to unemployment, he would often read the following passage from Ruskin's *Unto this Last*:

“Thirdly,—that any man, or woman, or boy, or girl, out of employment, should be at once received at the nearest Government school, and set to such work as it appeared, on trial, they were fit for, at a fixed rate of determinable every year: —that, being found incapable of work through ignorance, they should be taught, or being found incapable of work through sickness, should be tended; but that found objecting to work, they should be set, under compulsion of the strictest nature, to the more painful and degrading forms of necessary toil, especially to that in mines and other places of danger (such danger being, however, diminished to the utmost by careful regulation and discipline) and the due wages of such work be retained—cost of compulsion first abstracted—to be at the workman's command, so soon as he has come to sounder mind respecting the laws of employment”.

'This' recalled Mann, 'gave me a good jumping-ground at open-air meetings.'¹⁶⁵² Moreover, some years later, in the course of a speech delivered in Aberdeen, Mann argued in favour of provision of work to the unemployed, again citing Carlyle in support of his arguments. Here, two things are particularly interesting: first, the language of duty and citizenship, which, as we have seen, had been central to Carlyle; and, second, the fact that Mann cited both Carlyle and John Stuart Mill. Mann declared:

I ask you now, is it not the case that you and I as citizens of this country, responsible like other citizens for families, being desirous of discharging our duties in a becoming and honourable fashion, unwilling to live at other people's expense, but not being specially desirous that other able-bodied people should live at our expense – is it not admissible or desirable that we should seek now to apply very definite principles for the rectification of these defects?... [we] have vowed as men and women may be permitted to vow, and, like Carlyle declare, that for ourselves and our children who are following us, we will spend

¹⁶⁵²Tom Mann, *Tom Mann's Memoirs* (London: The Labour Publishing Company Ltd., 1923), 50-52

ourselves in the endeavour to secure to the men, women, and children of our country, at least as good conditions as we now give to the ordinary cart-horse... The desire is to place within the reach of every properly behaved citizen all that is essential to real life and well-being, therefore we must not have excessive work, and we ought to have enough work.

Mann then cited 'one simple sentence from the autobiography of John Stuart Mill': "The Social Problem of the future we considered to be, how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action, with common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation for all in the benefits of combined labour."¹⁶⁵³

As has been noted in the previous section, Mann around this time worked alongside members of the Salvation Army, who were also attempting to confront the problem of unemployment. Indeed, they were also engaged in practical experiments at the 'Organisation of Labour', particularly the establishment of workshops for the unemployed. Moreover, as Carlyle's friend Francis Espinasse pointed out, 'General Booth's *In Darkest England*' contained, 'in support of its thesis, several quotations from Carlyle on the organisation of labour'.¹⁶⁵⁴ However, this was something of an understatement – Booth's book in fact contained a whole appendix of long excerpts from *Past and Present*.¹⁶⁵⁵ Booth informed his readers of the Salvation Army's efforts in the following terms:

Our Industrial Factory at Whitechapel was established this Spring. We opened it on a very small scale. It has developed until we have nearly ninety men at work. Some of these are skilled workmen who are engaged in carpentry.... Others are engaged in mat making, some are cobblers, others painters, and so forth. This trial effort has, so far, answered admirably.¹⁶⁵⁶

As Booth made clear, such enterprises were not intended as a charitable venture: 'Mere charity', he wrote, 'while relieving the pinch of hunger, demoralises the recipient'.¹⁶⁵⁷ To the contrary, those employed in the workshops would be expected to earn their living. Booth explained:

¹⁶⁵³Tom Mann, 'The Socialists' Programme', speech delivered at North Aberdeen, 25th Apr. 1896, first published by Labour Press, 1896, as reprinted in *Tom Mann's Social and Economic Writings*, ed. Laurent, 69-71. This passage from Mill was also cited by Keir Hardie in the House of Commons on 23rd Apr. 1901. See *Keir Hardie's Speeches and Writings (From 1888 to 1915)*, ed. E. Hughes (Glasgow: "Forward" Printing and Publishing Company Ltd., n.d.), 107.

¹⁶⁵⁴Francis Espinasse, *Literary Recollections and Sketches* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 187

¹⁶⁵⁵Booth, *In Darkest England*, appendix 5, 'Carlyle on the Social Obligations of the Nation Forty-Five Years Ago'.

¹⁶⁵⁶Booth, *In Darkest England*, 107.

¹⁶⁵⁷Booth, *In Darkest England*, 87.

I do not wish to have any hand in establishing a new centre of demoralisation.... To develop self-respect in the man, to make him feel that at last he has got his foot planted on the first rung of the ladder which leads upwards, is vitally important, and this cannot be done unless the bargain between him and me is strictly carried out.¹⁶⁵⁸

Indeed, as we have seen, Carlyle had considered the 'Organisation of Labour' a means not to higher wages or material abundance, but rather to the moral rehabilitation of the individuals concerned. In this regard, while Carlyle's ideas might have owed more to classical stoicism than to 'Calvinism', they could also be combined with Christian understandings of sin and redemption. Booth wrote:

You may clothe the drunkard, fill his purse with gold, establish him in a well-furnished home, and in three, or six, or twelve months he will once more be on the Embankment, haunted by delirium tremens, dirty, squalid, and ragged. Hence, in all cases where a man's own character and defects constitute the reasons for his fall, that character must be changed and that conduct altered if any permanent beneficial results are to be attained. If he is a drunkard, he must be made sober; if idle, he must be made industrious; if criminal, he must be made honest; if impure, he must be made clean.¹⁶⁵⁹

Or, as Booth put it elsewhere in the book: 'All material help from without is useful only in so far as it develops moral strength within'.¹⁶⁶⁰ Like Carlyle, Booth argued that this would require the 'recognition of the importance of discipline and organisation, what may be called regimented co-operation'.¹⁶⁶¹ In response to those who objected to such 'authoritarianism', Booth replied:

Discipline, and that of the most merciless description, is enforced upon multitudes of these people even now. Nothing that the most authoritative organisation of industry could devise in the excess of absolute power, could for a moment compare with the slavery enforced to-day in the dens of the sweater. It is not a choice between liberty and discipline that confronts these unfortunates, but between discipline mercilessly enforced by starvation and inspired by futile greed, and discipline accompanied with regular rations and administered solely for their own benefit... Compared with their normal condition of existence, the most rigorous

¹⁶⁵⁸Booth, *In Darkest England*, 107.

¹⁶⁵⁹Booth, *In Darkest England*, 85.

¹⁶⁶⁰Booth, *In Darkest England*, 44.

¹⁶⁶¹Booth, *In Darkest England*, 90.

discipline... would be an escape from slavery into freedom.¹⁶⁶²

Thus, like Carlyle, Booth believed that the use of authority, provided it was wielded for the good of those subject to it, might serve as a means to true freedom for the individual, economic, social, moral and spiritual. Moreover, like Carlyle, Booth also stressed the contribution that judicious use of authority might make to the regeneration of the community as a whole. The aim of his 'Scheme', he explained, consisted 'in the formation of these people into self-helping and self-sustaining communities, each being a kind of co-operative society, or patriarchal family, governed and disciplined on the principles which have already proved so effective in the Salvation Army'.¹⁶⁶³

As we have seen in a preceding chapter, by the time of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle had decisively shifted his emphasis from individual 'Captains of Industry' to the State, as the most likely initiator of the 'Organisation of Labour'. Within the early Labour Movement, it was this later argument that appears to have obtained most resonance.¹⁶⁶⁴ For instance, upon the centenary of Carlyle's birth, in 1895, William Martin, the president of the Ruskin Society at Glasgow, delivered an address at Carlyle's native Ecclefechan, in which he declared:

The progress of political economy as a science of social well-being, and the whole tendency of recent social legislation, had been in the direction of Carlyle's teaching. The organization of labour was, according to Carlyle, "the universal vital problem of the world," and did we not to-day feel it to be so? Carlyle taught that it could not be solved by "isolated men and their vague efforts," but by Government.¹⁶⁶⁵

Around the same time, Keir Hardie made use of Carlyle's military analogy for the 'Organisation of Labour', which, as we have seen, Carlyle had taken from the Saint-Simonians. Citing Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Hardie wrote:

¹⁶⁶²Booth, *In Darkest England*, 266.

¹⁶⁶³Booth, *In Darkest England*, 90.

¹⁶⁶⁴There were, however, exceptions. In his memoirs, Ben Tillett remarked upon the recent attempts of Lord Melchett, head of the 'Group of Employers', to initiate a process of dialogue with the Trades Union Congress. Using Carlyle's characteristic phrase, Tillett described Lord Melchett as 'one of the most realistic, yet at the same time, the most visionary of our Great Captains of Industry', continuing: 'the initiative of Lord Melchett and his associates, in promoting as employers frank discussions of industrial problems with the representatives of Trade Unionism, is a new and momentous step, implying a recognition of the organized power which I, and others like me, have given a lifetime to form and to foster; and implying also a recognition of the fact that the rise of organized power gives responsibility and duties to those who control it, in order that it may be used to conserve and expand, and not to destroy social security, and the prosperity and happiness of all' (Tillett, *Memoirs and Reflections*, 246-248). Thus, it may be that Carlyle's calls in *Past and Present* for 'Captains of Industry' to accept their duties and responsibilities, and to work alongside their employees for the common good, were not altogether utopian.

¹⁶⁶⁵'Address at Ecclefechan', in *The Times* (5th Dec. 1895), 6

“To bring these hordes of captainless soldiers under due captaincy? That is really the question of questions: on the answer to which turns... the fate of all Governments.” These words are pregnant with new meaning to-day... We can organise an army for purposes of destruction: is the organisation of an industrial army to ply the arts of peace beyond our powers?... Increase the sum of social advantages which belong to labour; make it impossible that men and women shall exhaust themselves with overwork; that their manhood and their womanhood should be corrupted by idleness... Do all these things, and do them in such a way that they will reach every citizen to-day and be the birthright of every child born in these islands, and the solving of the Labour problem has begun.¹⁶⁶⁶

In 1919, Alfred Waterson, Labour MP for Kettering, moved a motion on the 'Prevention of Unemployment', 'one of the greatest dreads of the working classes'. According to Waterson, 'donations granted by the State' offered no solution, tending not only to 'drive this country into complete bankruptcy', but also to 'demoralise the people', and 'make them feel that the Government should give them gold when they are on the streets unemployed'. The majority of the unemployed, Waterson argued, 'would be more prepared to have employment which would give them individual liberty and that independence which I believe lies deep in the heart of every true British citizen'. For this reason, 'honest work should be found for them and a reasonable pay given in return for that work'. Only then, he concluded, 'when this great dread of unemployment is taken from above them', would 'their thoughts and their minds' be 'in such a state that they are enabled to enjoy and to grasp those larger things of life which ought to be theirs'. Speaking in support of Waterson, Neil M'Lean, Labour MP for Glasgow Govan, declared:

Every Member of this House is receiving, like myself, letters every day from men and women who are signing these unemployment books, asking if anything can be done in the way of finding them useful employment, so that they can say they are really living as men and women and doing their duty by the community... The people outside are not asking for charity from the Government. They believe, with Carlyle, that they are capable of producing, if given the opportunity, more than is sufficient to provide themselves, with a healthy and happy life, and they are demanding from the Government, as the people responsible for looking after the destinies of the nation, and as the men in whose hands have

¹⁶⁶⁶Keir Hardie writing in *The Nineteenth Century* (Sep. 1894), reprinted in *Keir Hardie's Speeches and Writings*, 28-29.

been placed all the responsibilities of conducting the nation in the best interests of the whole population, that the Government shall give them, not charity, but the right to earn their own living in a free country.¹⁶⁶⁷

Regarding the debts of Labour MPs to Carlyle, three points are particularly worthy of retention here: first, the identification of work with freedom; second, the identification of work as a means to do one's 'duty by the community'; third, the preference for gainful employment over benefits and handouts; and, fourth, the language of authority, leadership, and the common good, that is, the charging of the 'Government' with the 'responsibilities of conducting the nation in the best interests of the whole population'.

In 1923, Labour MPs brought forward a similar motion in the House of Commons. Regarding the purpose of this epilogue, by far the most interesting contribution to the debate was that of John Brotherton, Labour MP for Gateshead (an area hit particularly hard by unemployment during these years). Seconding the motion, Brotherton, like Keir Hardie before him, reiterated Carlyle's proposal for an 'Organisation of Labour' on quasi-military lines. This, as we have seen, Carlyle had taken from the Saint-Simonians, later fusing it with Andrew Fletcher's concept of the citizen militia. Moreover, Brotherton drew on his own experience during the First World War, citing the latter in support of Carlyle's theory. He told the House:

I was engaged in one or two of your great munition factories during the war... We know, in that case, what was accomplished through the organisation of industry - which, may I remark in parenthesis, Thomas Carlyle many years ago said was one of the first problems to be undertaken in his day... If you could organise for the purpose of destroying property, surely it is not too much for us to ask that you should organise for the production of the things that we need daily... We want the Members of the Government, and the Minister of Labour in particular, to consider this subject from a new angle, instead of making preparations and arrangements for paying money in millions without getting any return, though the people who are receiving the money want to render some social service.

Brotherton then continued:

¹⁶⁶⁷'Prevention of Unemployment Bill', House of Commons debate, 21st Mar. 1919, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 113, cc2403-552403.

I came by an Employment Exchange in Walworth Road this morning where hundreds of men and women of my class, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, were going in and out for their unemployment benefit—their dole, as you say. Could they not be better employed? That is the question we are putting to you, and we believe that this Bill if taken seriously into consideration by every Member of this House, if Members put their best into it, could be brought to be of useful service for the good of the general community.

'Will you, then', asked Brotherton, 'begin to organise the workers of the country with that object, and let us get to work?'.¹⁶⁶⁸

EMPIRE

As has been seen in a previous chapter, accounts of Carlyle's imperial thought have too often been dominated by one short article, the 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question' (1849), and overshadowed by the question of racism. This has served to obscure other aspects of his writings on empire, particularly a 'civilisational' narrative of progress, grounded in the notion of peaceful work, and a vision of a 'united British Empire', governed on a meritocratic basis, through a federated system of parliaments. In the following section, it will be very briefly suggested that Carlyle's own writings were one of those factors that served to bind together the imperial working-class, and the various imperial offshoots of the British Labour movement.

In Britain itself, Carlyle's vision of empire seems to have continued to resonate during the early twentieth century. For instance, having recently visited Canada, Ben Tillett deplored the extent to which the country's resources had been left untapped by the British. Calling for a more ambitious approach, he also reiterated Carlyle's call for the 'Organisation of Labour' on quasi-military lines. In his *Memories and Reflections* (1931), Tillett asked:

Why is it that nations who at the threat of war organized massed armies of millions of men... cannot make war upon, open up, the vast virgin territory which can yield such illimitable wealth, with the same vigour and resolution? I believe that a chain of communities can be organized in Canada, and the drive and energy and capacity which went to the making of the Kitchener Army and directed the course of the titanic struggle between 1914 and 1919 can

¹⁶⁶⁸'Prevention of Unemployment Bill', House of Commons Debate, 27th Apr. 1923, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 163, cc859-935859.

be employed in these post-war years in the solution of problems, different indeed in their character and consequence, but not more baffling, more pressing, or more a menace to a civilized order of life.¹⁶⁶⁹

While Tillett was writing these words, Carlyle's ideas were finding a significant echo in Canada itself, particularly in the Canadian House of Commons. For instance, in 1930, Edward Joseph Garland, elected as a member of the United Farmers of Alberta, told the House:

I think it was Thomas Carlyle who said that a man willing to work and unable to find work is perhaps the saddest sight that fortune's inequality exhibits under the sun. And yet Carlyle had not the opportunity in those days of seeing what we have seen in the west.

Moreover, Garland then reiterated Carlyle's argument that unemployment was due not to bad laws or institutions, but rather the inner logic of the market itself. 'Unemployment', Garland explained, 'is due neither to protection nor to free trade'. Rather, he continued the 'root cause of unemployment' was 'lack of purchasing power. There is not a sufficient volume of money or buying capacity given back to the producers of the world to buy the goods that they have produced'.¹⁶⁷⁰ Six years later, in 1936, another debate on unemployment took place, in which opposing MPs quoted Carlyle back and forth across the floor. In introducing his proposals to deal with unemployment, the Liberal minister of labour, Norman McLeod Rogers, informed the House that 'sometimes for moral discipline and mental exercise I turn to the pages of Carlyle'. He then cited the opening passages of *Past and Present*, namely, those on the 'Condition-of-England question', before quoting Carlyle's censures against 'Morrison's Pills': "Brothers, I am sorry I have got no Morrison's Pill for curing the maladies of Society".¹⁶⁷¹ This infuriated MPs belonging to the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation, who believed that Carlyle was being misappropriated, and the question of unemployment trivialised. Angus MacInnis, MP for Vancouver East, responded:

Sometimes I too, like the Minister of Labour, "for moral discipline and mental exercise," turn to the pages of Carlyle. Of all his striking passages the one which I am about to quote seems to me to explain most clearly the cause of the conditions facing society to-day. This is taken from the first volume of the French Revolution: "The widow is gathering nettles for

1669Tillett, *Memories and Reflections*, 232

1670'Unemployment', Canadian House of Commons, 2nd Apr. 1930, in *Debates of House of Commons*, 4th Session, 16th Parliament, Vol. II, 1930 (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1930), 1203-1205.

1671'Employment Commission', Canadian House of Commons, 30th Mar. 1936, in *Debates of House of Commons*, 1st Session, 18th Parliament, Vol. II, 1936 (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, 1936), 1594.

her children's dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the Oeil de Boeuf, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle and name it rent and law. Such an arrangement must end.”... What was the arrangement which Carlyle said must come to an end? The arrangement by which the producers are exploited by the non-producers, the arrangement by which the producers create the wealth of the world and for creating it get a mere subsistence that keeps them from day to day. That situation is not worth continuing and it must come to an end.

'In a country like this', MacInnis continued, 'possessing enormous natural resources, great and efficient machinery of production, willing workers, and the technical skill and management necessary to run industry, the function of a government should be to bring these things together in order to create the essentials of a full life – not merely the means of subsistence, food, clothing and shelter, but everything that properly enters into the lives of the people'.¹⁶⁷² Another member of the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation, Charles Grant MacNeil (Vancouver North), added: 'If I remember correctly, Carlyle also questioned the outcome of the industrial revolution in its early days unless we make the machine our servant instead of our master'.¹⁶⁷³ For his part, James Shaver Woodworth, the founder and leader of the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation, and MP for Winnipeg North, regretted the minister's reference to 'Morrison's Pills', on the grounds that 'the interference might be left, that Carlyle to some extent condoned inactivity on the part of government'. He then cited another passage from *Past and Present*, where Carlyle had declared:

“The Laws of Laissez-faire, O Westminster, the laws of industrial Captain and industrial Soldier, how much more of idle Captain and industrial Soldier, will need to be remodelled, and modified, and rectified in a hundred and a hundred ways... With two million industrial Soldiers already sitting in Bastilles, and five million pining on potatoes, methinks Westminster cannot begin too soon!”.

Continuing, Shaver Woodworth proposed that the government take steps to organise a national programme of public works.¹⁶⁷⁴ Later in the debate, Tommy Douglas, Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation MP for Weyburn, seized his opportunity to quote from *Past and Present*, declaring :

The minister quoted Carlyle, and if he did nothing else he sent hon. members back to

¹⁶⁷²'Employment Commission', Canadian House of Commons, 2nd Apr. 1936, in *ibid.*, 1713-1714.

¹⁶⁷³*Ibid.*, 1737.

¹⁶⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 1746

reading Carlyle. I should like to quote Carlyle as follows: "Let inventive men consider, Whether the Secret of this Universe, and of Man's Life there, does, after all, as we rashly fancy it, consist in making money? With a Hell which means 'Failing to make money,' I do not think there is any Heaven possible that would suit one well; nor so much as an Earth that can be habitable long! In brief, all this Mammon-Gospel, of Supply-and-demand, Competition, Laissez-faire, and Devil take the hindmost, begins to be one of the shabbiest Gospels ever preached".¹⁶⁷⁵

The MPs of the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation thus clearly believed that Carlyle was on their side, rather than that of the minister.

In Australia, Carlyle also supplied much of the language through which working-class protest was articulated. For instance, in 1912, William Laird-Smith, an electrician, member of the Amalgamated Engineers' Union, and Labor member for Denison (Tasmania),¹⁶⁷⁶ cited the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, asking the House of Representatives:

What did Carlyle, who was not a politician, but an independent man, say of the condition of England... he said, at a time when England was supposed to have reached the zenith of its manufacturing glory, that British industrial existence was fast becoming one vast poison swamp of reeking pestilence, physically and morally... Thirty thousand outcast needlewomen working themselves swiftly to death, and three million paupers, rotting in forced idleness, helping the needlewomen to die... This was the condition of affairs as seen by Carlyle, an independent man who spoke of things how he saw them, and that is the condition of affairs which honourable members opposite would have in this fair land of ours.¹⁶⁷⁷

In addition to such protests, Australian Representatives also made use of Carlyle's more positive proposals for the 'Organisation of Labour'. A case in point was William Guthrie Spence. Born in the Orkney Islands in 1846, Spence had emigrated to Australia with his family, where he began work on a farm at the age of thirteen. A founding member of the Australian Workers' Union in 1894, Spence served as its secretary until 1894, and president until 1917. Moreover, he was also elected Labor

¹⁶⁷⁵'Employment Commission', Canadian House of Commons, 3rd Apr. 1936, 1759

¹⁶⁷⁶See R. P. Davis, 'Smith, William Henry Laird (1869-1942)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 11 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

¹⁶⁷⁷'Governor-General's Speech: Address-in-Reply', House of Representatives, 4th July 1912.

member for Darling in 1901.¹⁶⁷⁸ In a speech delivered to the House of Representatives in 1904, Spence challenged traditional understandings of independence, explaining:

of all classes those who are called independent are in reality most dependent. They could do nothing but for the labour of those who they would not think of admitting into their drawing-room. Some of them would not even be able to cook a meal for themselves without the labour which they employ; they would die of starvation without it, and yet it is said they are independent. That is a misleading term.

Instead, Spence argued that in the modern world 'we are all dependent upon one another', particularly through the division of labour. For this reason, Spence implied, independence could now only be meaningfully defined in collective terms. 'Surely', he asked 'there is something in the idea of Socialism, if by that means such a state of things may be altered so that every one may have a chance to do the work for which he is most fitted, and thus lead to the better industrial organization of society'. Such new social arrangements, enabling the individual to find out and do the work to which he was most suited, would represent a marked improvement on the present, where, Spence argued, 'people have to select occupations, not from choice, but from force'. In particular, the labourer found himself 'forced and driven' by market forces, to the extent that 'his position can only be described as one of wage slavery'. 'Where', Spence added, 'under such circumstances, is the room for the development of individual liberty?'. Setting out an alternative, Spence then cited Cicero and Carlyle in quick succession. He told the House:

A very wise and suggestive thing was said by Cicero - "One thing ought to be aimed at by men, and the interest of each individual and all collectively should be the same, for if each should grasp at his individual interests all human society would be dissolved."... Unless we consider the interests of each and all, society must fail. The members of society must be studied entirely from the collective stand-point... Only by so considering them, can we afford an opportunity for individual development on the best lines. To do otherwise is to permit a system under which greed is allowed to work injury and injustice to the great mass of the community. Thomas Carlyle, the great thinker, said - "This that they call the organization of labour is the universal vital problem of the world. It is the problem of the whole future for all who will in future pretend to govern men." I commend that saying of the

¹⁶⁷⁸See Coral Lansbury and Bede Nairn, 'Spence, William Guthrie (1846-1926)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 6 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976).

old prophet to the present Government for their careful consideration – the organization of labour is the universal and vital problem. It is the one problem which is looming large in connexion with the foundation work of this great Commonwealth.¹⁶⁷⁹

Given the arguments that have been made in preceding chapters regarding Carlyle's republicanism, the reference to Cicero is particularly significant. It seems that for Spence, as for Carlyle, the 'Organisation of Labour' was intended to serve as a means to collective independence from market forces. Indeed, as Spence made quite clear, only a well-ordered commonwealth would enable the individual to attain the highest possible degree of freedom and cultivation.

Other Labor representatives used Carlyle to more quotidian purposes. One noteworthy example was Charles McDonald, who had been an apprentice printer, and later a watchmaker, before becoming president of the Australian Labour Federation in 1890.¹⁶⁸⁰ Having been elected Labor member for Kennedy in 1901, McDonald argued that in awarding contracts for public work, the government should give preference to unionised labour, so as to encourage men to join unions. This would, in turn, he told the House in 1914, facilitate a system of 'compulsory arbitration', designed to 'do away with strikes'. Continuing, McDonald declared:

An eminent writer has finely said - "This that they call the organization of labour is the universal vital problem of the world. It is the problem of the whole future for all who will in future pretend to govern men." Those are the words of Thomas Carlyle.

McDonald then threatened that if the House failed to adopt this measure, the consequence would be serious industrial unrest. He continued, ominously:

[Carlyle] has said further - "Look around you. Your world-hosts are all in mutiny, in confusion, destitution. They will not march further for you on sixpence a day and supply and demand principle; they will not, nor ought they, nor can they." Honourable members opposite may well pay attention to the views expressed by a man of such eminence and mental greatness as Carlyle.¹⁶⁸¹

1679'Motion of Want of Confidence', House of Representatives, 23rd Sep. 1904.

1680See Tim Moroney, 'McDonald, Charles (1860-1925)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 10 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

1681'Government Preference Prohibition Bill', House of Representatives, 13th May 1914.

The following week, McDonald's arguments were echoed by John Arthur, Labor member for Bendigo. The son of a gold-miner, Arthur had graduated from the University of Melbourne, going on to become a prominent lawyer at the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.¹⁶⁸² Following the same line of argument as McDonald, Arthur informed the House that he and his fellow Labor members 'think that we, as Government employers, should set an example to other employers to bring their men into organizations, so that the law will take hold of them and bring about that condition of industrial peace which only organization can bring about'. Arthur then argued that a system of compulsory arbitration would benefit not only workers and employers, but the community as a whole. 'The Arbitration Act', he explained, 'encourages men to come within the law, and when men consent to do that, to give up their strike weapons and be regulated for the benefit of the community, we say they deserve preference, because they are law abiding, as against the non-unionist, who does not observe the law'. He then continued:

My honourable friends opposite think they are working for the employers' interests, but, as a matter of fact they are not, and the large employers recognise that it is so. It has been recognised for years that the organization of labour is the most essential thing in the world. Carlyle said it was the most vital problem in the universe. His words - "This that they call the organization of labour is the universal vital problem of the world. It is the problem of the whole future for all who will in future pretend to govern men."¹⁶⁸³

Here, Carlyle's call for the 'Captains of Industry' to co-operate with their workers, under the auspices of the state, and for both classes to bind themselves together in a shared dedication to the common weal, found an echo.

Around the same time, a similar phenomenon was occurring in South Africa. New light on Carlyle's influence upon the intellectual culture of the imperial working-class has recently been shed by Jonathan Hyslop's biography of James Thompson Bain. Bain, already referred to above, was born in Scotland, but emigrated to South Africa in 1888. Having already become an avid reader of Carlyle, he considered himself, as Hyslop puts it, 'a missionary of socialism'.¹⁶⁸⁴ A leading trade unionist and founding member of the Transvaal Independent Labour Party, Bain continued to draw upon Carlyle's writings. Referring to the recent gold-rush, Bain wrote in a local newspaper:

¹⁶⁸²See John R. Thompson, 'Arthur, John Andrew (1875-1914)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 7 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979). The Court had been established in 1904.

¹⁶⁸³'Government Preference Prohibition Bill. Second Reading', House of Representatives, 21st May 1914.

¹⁶⁸⁴Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist*, 77

My eyes light on a passage where Carlyle writes in dealing with the then condition of England, words that seem to me to be as true of our South Africa as they were and are still true of Great Britain: “England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want of every kind; yet England is dying of inanition”... “To whom then is this wealth of England wealth? Who is it that it blesses, makes happier, wiser, beautifuler, in any way better?”... Carlyle, you will agree with me might have had Johannesburg – if Johannesburg had existed when he wrote those lines – in his mind. We have longed for gold, and truly we have got gold, ever so many millions of it per year. And how much better are we for it?¹⁶⁸⁵

At one point, Bain found himself in solitary confinement in a Johannesburg prison. Here, his only company was a copy of Carlyle's lectures *On Heroes*. In an article in a local newspaper, Bain recalled:

even there, when confined as a criminal in a solitary cell... Carlyle still comforted and heartened me despite my surroundings, and throughout the whole month, during which I was not even allowed to see a single person, I found company and companionship in Carlyle.¹⁶⁸⁶

'To every worker who has not read Carlyle', Bain concluded, 'I would say spend your last shilling in getting acquainted with him'.¹⁶⁸⁷

1685Bain in the *Worker* (Nov./ Dec. 1913), as cited in Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist*, 225-226. Having been deported back to Britain following the defeat of the strike, Bain made a point of visiting Carlyle's birthplace in Ecclefechan (260).

1686Bain in the *Worker* (25th Dec. 1913), as cited in Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist*, 151. Remarkably, Bain pasted an obituary of the German socialist leader Wilhelm Liebknecht into the front cover of Carlyle's work. As Hyslop notes, Bain was thus 'inserting into Carlyle's book his belief that the socialists were the heroes of the present' (154).

1687As cited in Hyslop, 'A Scottish Socialist Reads Carlyle in Johannesburg Prison, June 1900: Reflections on the Literary Culture of the Imperial Working Class', in *Journal of South African Studies*, 29:3 (2003), 642-643, 649-651.

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